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ABSTRACT

This publication traces developments in the use of profiles produced over the last two years and attempts to face some difficult and controversial issues raised repeatedly in any consideration of profiling. The introduction addresses assessment issues. Section 2 discusses the technical issues surrounding profiles, or records of achievement, and their relationship to discusses the technical issues surrounding profiles and their relationship to graded assessments. Section 3 makes a case for the assessment of personal qualities of students and offers some guiding principles. Section 4 discusses the importance of staff development and makes suggestions as to its implementation. In section 5, some major further education examining bodies in Great Britain (Business Education Council, Technician Education Council, City and Guilds of London Institute, and Royal Society of Arts Examination Board) develop their recent thinking and chart progress in profiling, illustrated by their currently available schemes. Section 6 provides accounts of developments in Northern Ireland. It includes a review of a local education authority profile initiative that illustrates a range of profiling formats and indicates the practical support needed for effective implementation. Profiling in the Youth Training Programme is also reviewed. Appended are: (1) a draft policy statement on records of achievement for school leavers by the Department of Education and Science; and (2) comments on this statement by the authors of the present document. (YLB)

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Profiles in action

Edited by Jo Mortimore

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Dear Sir/Madam

PROFILES IN ACTION

The attached document of the above title follows up our earlier state of the art document* which has been well received. Profiles in Action attempts to do three things:

i) it reminds readers of some of the basic principles and problems of profiles;
ii) it contains contributions from the major FE validating/examining bodies on their current situation with respect to profiles;
iii) it begins to identify new areas for discussion and development.

In this way we hope the document looks to the past, present and future. As long as there are problems associated with assessment and certification, there will be problems of profiling. There remains a lack of fundamental research in this area and one paper suggests that in a possible union of profiles and graded assessments there could emerge "the exciting prospect of bringing together the humanistic and quantitative traditions in educational assessment". Another paper, for the first time perhaps, discusses the pros and cons of profiling personal qualities; and a further contribution suggests an approach to staff development in this area. In addition to the contributions from examining bodies, there are descriptions of an LEA approach and of the Northern Ireland experience via the Youth Training Programme.

As we go to print, the programme for piloting the DES/WO programme on Records of Achievement for School Leavers is becoming apparent**; the CPVE Consultative Document has appeared; and YTS is reappraising the nature of its certification. An increasing amount of action is now under way. In the meantime, it is hoped that the attached document will assist readers in understanding why the movement towards student profiling is making progress.

Yours faithfully

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

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* Profiles FEU September 1982

** The draft statement of policy is included as Appendix A and the FEU response as Appendix B.

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1. Introduction

Jack Mansell and Jean Shirley

1. It is nearly two years since the publication of *Profiles* FEU, 1982. During this time a number of relevant reports and surveys – from the Schools Council, City and Guilds of London Institute, Department of Education and Science (DES), Institute of Management Studies, to name the most widely available – have been produced. Our aim in adding to this apparent plethora of publications is two-fold: first to trace developments in the use of profiles produced over the last two years, and second to attempt to face some of the difficult and controversial issues which are raised repeatedly in any consideration of profiling.

What's new?

2. The recent flurry of profiling activity – local, regional and national – has resulted in the proliferation of new schemes. These are underpinned by such different philosophies and are of such varying formats that many users are understandably confused as to which to use. Although some institutions will wish to develop their own profiles to suit individual needs, others may go through the process merely because they are not aware of what is available. In doing so they are in danger not only of re-inventing the wheel but of confusing those very people – students, teachers and employers – whom profiles might be intended to inform. The purpose of this further publication, therefore, is to bring together a number of recent developments in the field.

3. Sections 2 to 4 set the scene. Nuttall and Goldstein develop a thought-provoking discussion of the technical issues surrounding profiles and their relationship to graded assessments. The case for the assessment of personal qualities is made by Geoff Stanton, who also offers some guiding principles. This is followed by Barbara Pearce's discussion of the importance of staff development, along with some well-tried suggestions as to its implementation.

4. In Section 5, some major FE examining bodies develop their recent thinking and chart progress in profiling, illustrated by their currently available schemes. The bodies concerned have all, to some extent, consulted users – students, teachers, employers, 'vocational gatekeepers'* – and emerge with a reasonable level of agreement on philosophy (the centrality of the student, the importance of the formative role of profiling, the range of qualities to be assessed etc.) but with a wide variation in format. There are signs, however, that in solving the problems particular to each type of format, there may be moves towards a common one. These moves may be encouraged by national developments over the next two years for example, a (DES) record of achievement,** a Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) profile, a Welsh pupil profile,*** and a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) assessment mechanism.†

5. Since Northern Ireland tackled assessment in its Youth Training Programme (YTP) scheme a year before the rest of the UK adopted YTS, the account of developments given in Section 6 should be of interest to readers. These developments attempt to ensure the centrality of the trainee and of the curriculum in the process of profiling:

> 'It is not possible to make useful value judgements on the basic skills being monitored without promoting learning through some activity based method'.

6. It is now impossible to ignore schools-based profiling developments. Such collaborative ventures as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) and CPVE, the work of the Schools Council†† and that of the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations are of equal importance to FE as to schools. Section 6 includes a review of a local education authority (LEA) profile initiative which, with its concentration on the process of profile development, illustrates a range of profiling formats and philosophies, and therefore a range of decisions to be made in local – and indeed national – design. It also indicates the practical support needed for effective implementation to take place.

**An evaluation of a basic abilities profiling system across a range of education and training provision* CGLI, 1983 (A 'vocational gatekeeper' is a person of authority who can help to provide access to employment or vocational training).

***Records of achievement for school leavers* (a draft policy statement) DES/Welsh Office, 1983

****Profile reporting in Wales* Schools Council Committee for Wales, 1983

†*Assessment, review, recording and certification* Draft 4. MSC, 1983

††Now the School Curriculum Development Committee.

How do we assess and grade?

7. The assessment issues which pervade profiling are largely to do with the norm versus criterion referencing debate:

'If assessments are to be referenced against the norm, what is the basis for the norm – the class, school, or whole age group?'*

If, as is more commonly the case with the profiling systems described here, assessments are claimed to be criterion-referenced, can criteria be defined across all parameters with equal validity? It is true that conventional examinations traditionally sacrifice validity for reliability. It is also true that the above problems are intrinsic to assessment and merely exposed by profiling; but neither statement solves the problem for profiling. Desmond Nuttall and Harvey Goldstein, in Section 2, see a way forward in the union of profiles and graded assessments:

'From this could emerge a most fruitful collaboration that could give a new rigour to humanistic assessment while preserving the pre-eminence of validity and curricular relevance'.

They go on to argue that action research is essential in order to define and develop ways of providing evidence to substantiate all the statements on a profile.** For example, the methods by which one may validly and reliably assess mathematical achievement may be different from those needed to assess practical or decision-making competencies. There are many problems to be solved that are common to profiles and records of achievement in schools and in FE. It is hoped that the developing DES policy and experimental activity in this area will have regard to some of them.

8. Such problems and issues are also common to training. The MSC document mentioned in a footnote to paragraph 4 suggests a formula for statements of achievement, which should include the four elements:

(i) what they can do (performance);

(ii) in what circumstances (conditions);

(iii) to what level (standard); and

(iv) in which environment (context).

For example, the trainee:

'can operate a switchboard (performance), in a hotel reception (context) during busy periods (condition) to the satisfaction of supervisors (standard)'.

All competencies might not lend themselves so easily to this formula, but it provides a framework for including assessment resulting from objective testing, from performance in assignments, or from observation of experience, as appropriate. It also takes us nearer to criterion-referenced testing.

What we assess

9. So much for how we assess; there are also problems surrounding the issue of what we should be assessing. Many employers, for example, are concerned with the assessment of personal qualities; yet many teachers question the acceptability of including such assessments. These concerns partly relate to the danger of giving subjective judgements a spurious objectivity, particularly where a numerical grading is used; they are also partly to do with the 'right' of teachers to make such judgements. Any case for the assessment of personal qualities is perhaps most strongly supported by the effect of assessment on the curriculum. Although we may make 'personal effectiveness' a prime curriculum aim, if we do not assess it, it loses cachet with both student and teacher. If we ignore such qualities, our profile easily becomes a poor, mechanistic thing and one of its main justifications, that of giving a rounded picture, disappears. On the other hand, if we include such qualities, the curriculum must provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate them. Geoff Stanton's (Section 3) practical solutions relate largely to the involvement of the student and to the offering of evidence rather than to making a judgement on it. As he says, 'appeared bored by my lessons' sounds rather different from 'inattentive'.

Record keeping and profiles guidance for schools ILEA Research and Statistics Report, 1982

**This is one of the aims of the RSA/FEU Vocational Preparation Teachers' Certificate (see FEU Research Project 165)

Skills needed for assessment

10. There is a clear need for certain skills, qualities and attitudes, both in profilers and their managers. Such skills may include those related to assessment, to negotiating and contracting learning agendas, to co-ordinating the goals and strategies of a staff team, and to recording and summarising information. The furtherance of these skills may require staff development, additional resources and management support, all of which, in turn, may expose the need for staff development of management. Barbara Pearce classifies training under the headings of: information giving, awareness raising and skill training. Although her contribution is intentionally practical, her penultimate sentence bears repeating:

'However good the training, however good the profile system to be adopted, little will be achieved if . . . ongoing support for each member of staff is absent'.

Aids to assessment

11. Since the activity of profiling generates much paperwork, poses organisational difficulties and is demanding of staff time, computer-based profiling has been considered as one way of helping to solve some of these problems. *Computer aided profiling* FEU, 1983 describes the process necessary to generate descriptors for a cross-college profiling scheme. Profiling developments in Wales have made full use of computer assistance and reference is made in Section 6 to Northern Ireland's adoption of computer assistance in implementing a City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) profiling system. Individual colleges have developed programmes to implement the CGLI and Technician Education Council (TEC) profiles and two colleges* are engaged in FEU projects to computerise their Royal Society of Arts (RSA) practical profile schemes. The examination boards have investigated the possibilities of using computers for keeping records, issuing reports and cataloguing materials. There is undoubtedly a growing body of experience in computer aided profiling but, whilst the principle appears to be acceptable, the solutions are inevitably ad hoc, localised and reliant on programming expertise. Because of this, the FEU has just embarked on a project* to produce a generic microcomputer based package to assist profiling. This will not be tied to either a particular curriculum or profile, but will be transferable to as many systems as are available. The package will include not only software with technical/user documentation, but also educational support material relating, as appropriate, to both teaching and non-teaching staff.

Assessment for whom?

12. Guidelines from the DES indicate that there is now a consensus that profiles, or records of achievement, should be available across the entire ability range. This is because they include qualities which are not assessed by formal examinations; because their formative functions are as helpful to academic as to other students; because examinations should, in any case, be part of the evidence recorded on a profile; finally, because to limit profiles to the 'unexaminable' would be to render them worse than valueless. In practice, in many institutions profiles are offered only to the academically less able.** Some of the developments mentioned in this publication (CPVE, CGLI Youth Trainers' Award, etc.) should help to bring the practice closer to the consensus but the signs are that many teachers need convincing that the benefits of profile records apply to all learners.

13. Recognition of these benefits may depend on an understanding of the use of profiling formatively 'as a means of promoting personal development by diagnosing an individual's strengths and weaknesses and acting as a basis for discussion of how performance can be improved'.*** This in turn raises the question of whether the same document which fulfils this function for students and tutors can also act as a summative record for progression. Is the document not likely to be too long, to have information in it that is inappropriate for public consumption, and is that information likely to be expressed in terms unfamiliar to outsiders? It would seem undesirable, however, to separate the two uses, if only because external recognition confers status. But a more fundamental reason lies in our changing pattern of

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*See FEU Research Projects 80 and 86

*Research Project 196.

**Goacher, B., *Recording achievement at 16+*, Longman for Schools Council, 1983

****Records of achievement at 16*, DES, 1983 employment. If work is to be periodic and changing, many people will return, at different stages in their lives, to part-time or full-time education or training. This will be facilitated if they bring with them some kind of cumulative record of achievement and experience – which will necessitate the use of the same basic document for formative and summative purposes. It may be that the answer lies in a comprehensive formative document, from which appropriate summative information is selected with computer assistance.

Back to the curriculum

14. Whatever the activity in this area, we must be watchful that progress is not spurious and the principles of good assessment are not jeopardised. In our 1982 document* we identified some basic issues and principles:

(i) the relationship between profiles and certification is rarely one of parity;

(ii) profiles are documents constructed by professional teachers and trainers, describing as accurately and succinctly as possible the knowledge, skills and experiences of an individual relative to a particular curriculum;

(iii) profiles should be comparable if they are related to a common curriculum; this is not the same as being competitive;

(iv) if profiles are recording a wide and diverse range of assessments of knowledge, skills and experiences, they cannot – or should not – be aggregated into a single grade;

(v) the quality of a profile is related to the quality both of the curriculum and of individual assessments;

(vi) profiling cannot improve the quality of individual assessments, and non-valid assessments are not made valid by their inclusion on a profile;

(vii) profiles allow distinctions to be made between competence and incompetence at a very specific level, without a blanket rejection of the student;

(viii) formative profiling forces assessment into the learning process. To indicate incompetence and remain supportive is a difficult but vital task for any teacher and this reinforces the need to link formative assessment with counselling.

15. The contributions that follow are not necessarily unanimous in their praise of profiling; some are more enthusiastic than others but nowhere are profiles claimed to be a panacea. We have, in this issue, deliberately invited contributions which question the technical aspects of profiling, record genuine operational problems, and emphasise the need for staff development. We have done this in the confidence that the profiling concept is now sufficiently well established to withstand, indeed deserve, constructive criticism.

16. The reader must judge whether the issues raised in 1982 and summarised in paragraph 14 above, are nearer resolution in 1984. The problem of status remains. The growing acceptance of profiles cannot be seen as an excuse to reduce effort in searching for and exploring new and better methods of assessment. Teachers who hope to use profiles merely as a means of avoiding, at any level of specificity, the connotation of incompetence, are not being realistic. Finally, whilst profiles can encourage an appraisal of the curriculum served, they cannot automatically improve it. Poorly defined and unbalanced curricula may be exposed but cannot be corrected by profiles. A truly formative profiling system will encourage development of the curriculum as well as the student, and our next document on profiles may well explore their evaluative power. In the meantime we hope that this document encourages readers to conclude that certain progress is being made.

**Profiles* FEU, 1982

2. Profiles and Graded Tests: the Technical Issues

Desmond Nuttall and Harvey Goldstein

1. We shall review first, but briefly, what seems to be the current state of profiling; the aims and controversies which are being discussed. We shall then identify what seem to us to be the key technical issues which have yet to be solved before profiles can be accepted widely as satisfactory additions or alternatives to other forms of assessment. Then we shall describe and evaluate the graded test movement. Finally we shall link together graded testing and profile reporting and discuss the relationship between them. On all these topics we have been able to find little written about technical matters, and very little relevant empirical research, and in this article we therefore discuss the major technical issues in the hope of facilitating a more informed debate.

Current activity

2. The last few years have seen a considerable interest in profile reporting in education. An early report from the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE)*, has stimulated a variety of others both at the school level in the work of the Schools Council** and even more vigorously at the FE level in the work of the Further Education Unit (FEU)*** and the related City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) development work.†

3. There is general agreement that the disaggregated nature of the information in a profile is of greater potential use to students, lecturers and employers who wish to understand the specific strengths and weaknesses of an individual, rather than some average assessment. There is also a general recognition of the need to distinguish formative profiles which are produced during a course from summative ones which represent a final assessment and are typically based on an amalgamation over time of the formative set of assessments. Formative profiles are designed to be part of the learning process, to be discussed by lecturer and student together, while the summative kind are designed for the outside world and selection for employment. These two broad purposes may be often in conflict and affect the need for comparability and reliability in the assessments, as we shall demonstrate.

4. There is also conflict among the motives of the advocates of profiles. At one extreme, in the words of Broadfoot*, herself a collaborator in the SCRE work, profiles provide a viable alternative to the powerful 'anti-educational' constraint of public examinations. At the other is the Associated Examining Board's new A-level Geography examination which provides a profile by means of a separate grade for each of four papers, to yield more information from existing examinations, a development reviewed in detail by Harrison**. In between, in the mainstream of development, is the FEU and CGLI approach and that of SCRE and many of the schools studied in the Schools Council work, which see their profiles as existing alongside centralised examinations. In the case of the pre-vocational courses stimulated by the FEU, the intention seems to be that profiles should become a dominant element in assessment, while in schools there seems to be a recognition that public examinations will remain the dominant element for some time to come.

5. One feature common to most profiles, in contrast to examinations, is their inclusion of personal and social skills alongside so-called basic skills and more conventional attainments. Sometimes the personal and social skills are reported simply as records of activity, without judgment, but often they are assessed and graded (by the lecturer alone, or by the lecturer and student in partnership). In the CGLI Vocational Preparation course (365), for example, there are four ratings for each of the abilities 'to be self aware' and 'to cope with problems', as well as for 'calculating' and 'reading and writing'. Simple rating scales of this kind are widely used; each point is accompanied by a description of the ability or attainment level it represents. While it is usually admitted that some of these ratings will be more 'subjective' than others, the common aim appears to be to remove this element as far as possible by providing careful verbal descriptions, training the assessors carefully and carrying out periodic

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*Scottish Council for Research in Education *Pupils in profile*. Hodder and Stoughton for SCRE, 1977

**Balogh, J. *Profile reports for school leavers*. Longman for Schools Council, 1982; Goacher, B. *Recording achievement at 16+* Longman for Schools Council, 1983

****A basis for choice* 2nd Ed. FEU, 1982; *Profiles*. FEU, 1982.

†Stratton, N. J. *An evaluation of a basic abilities profiling system across a range of education and training provision* (Interim report for CGLI Profiling Project 3). CGLI, 1982a.

*Broadfoot, P. The pros and cons of profiles. *Forum, 24, 1982*. pp. 66-69.

**Harrison, A. W., *Profile reporting of examination results* Schools Council Examination Bulletin 43. Methuen Educational, 1983.

'quality control' checks on their work. Some more open-ended schemes use 'comment banks', consisting of comments whose placing on the scale has had prior agreement.*

6. This present article is largely concerned with some of the key technical issues which have received too little serious attention in the discussion up to the present. Such references as there are admit to the existence of problems of reliability and indeed validity, but fail to probe them in any depth.** In our view, however, there do exist serious technical problems and, unless these can be solved satisfactorily, profiles will rest on insecure foundations. We are concerned largely with the 'mainstream' developments, although we do recognize other strands to profiling. For readers who want a more detailed discussion of the general educational aspects of profiling, the reports by Balogh, Goacher, Burgess and Adams, the Scottish Vocational Preparation Unit and the FEU publications mentioned above will be useful.***

Norm versus criterion-referencing

7. This article does not provide the space to present a detailed discussion of this issue, but some general remarks are relevant. This is because, for both profiles and graded tests, criterion-referenced assessment is commonly advocated. Further, since criterion-referenced assessment has often been regarded as not amenable to quantitative manipulation in the same way as norm-referenced assessment, there is the possibility that some important technical problems will be ignored.

8. Firstly, it is extremely difficult to imagine a criterion-referenced assessment that is totally independent of norm levels. If a criterion point is to be *useful* it must obviously distinguish between individuals, so that the possibility exists that some will reach it and others will not. We can know whether this is the case only by collecting data on how many individuals do so – thus estimating a norm. Since, in fact, 'cut off' points are at choice, if not actually arbitrary, this 'norming' information will typically be used in determining them, at least initially. The difference between criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests lies in their methods of construction, intended use and interpretation. In terms of construction, criterion-referenced tests are designed consciously to avoid the psychometric models of norm-referenced tests, and in terms of use they employ fewer categories but ones which are designed to convey educationally meaningful information. In the case of profiles, the important issue is that of providing assessments that are both accurately related to the profile elements and comparable across individuals. This is not easy to achieve.

9. A central thrust of the profiles movement has been the attempt to relate assessment more closely to the curriculum than public examinations typically do.* Thus, teachers and lecturers have collaborated in the design and testing process, and assessments are intended to be made in the context of curriculum activities. If curricula differ, a comparability problem is immediately raised, since there is then no guarantee that consistent interpretations can be made. To overcome this problem, much effort has been put into an attempt to develop context-free assessments. The SCRE profile, for example, has one skill level for number which is described as 'Can handle routine calculations with practice', and the amplification is provided 'Fairly accurate but slow; is able to calculate percentages and money calculations etc.'

10. The difficulty with such out-of-context descriptions is that they are too poorly defined to ensure comparability, and the more precisely defined they become the more rooted in a context they become. Thus the above definition would need to specify what was meant by 'routine' so that such a calculation could be recognised. It would need to specify the order of difficulty of the 'percentages' referred to and make much more precise the phrase 'Fairly accurate but slow', and so on. Eventually, for a high degree of comparability to be achieved, the description would have to be so precise that we would be very nearly back with the classical test situation where everyone is administered effectively the same set of items – i.e. a highly specific context for the assessment. Of course such tests need not be paper-and-pencil ones. They could be

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*Black, H. D. & Dockrell, W. B. *Diagnostic assessment in secondary schools.* Hodder and Stoughton for SCRE, 1981.

**MacIntosh, H. G. A 17+ package: a view from the school in *Profiles* FEU 1982; Harrison, A. 1983.

***Balogh, J. 1982 op. cit.; Goacher, B. 1983 op. cit.; Burgess T. & Adams, E. (eds). *Outcomes of education.* Macmillan Education, 1980; Scottish Vocational Preparation Unit *Assessment in youth training: made-to-measure?* Jordanhill College, 1982.

*Mansell, J. A burst of interest in *Profiles* FEU 1982.

imaginative practical or work-related assessments, but still be context-bound, and thus would encounter the same problems as all traditional tests; namely not being equally relevant to each of a wide diversity of curricula.

11. It seems clear, therefore, that there is an inbuilt contradiction here that is not only unresolved, but also hardly discussed in the recent literature. Moreover, given the difficulty, if not the sheer impossibility, of achieving comparability between existing public examination boards because of the differences between the syllabuses and courses it is difficult to see a more satisfactory solution emerging for profiles.*

12. If profiles are to be faithful to a curriculum, then they will presumably have to sacrifice the aim of comparability across curricula, and cease striving to become context-free. This raises the possibility that some (key) elements of the profiles will be 'centralised' and others 'localised'. In the circumstances it seems very likely that the former will come to assume greater importance than the latter. It is interesting to note that government policy on the 17 + is that in 'key' areas (English, science, maths) performance will be 'externally assessed or moderated' while at the same time the policy generally supports profiles.** Whether the assessments are norm-referenced or criterion-referenced is secondary.

13. Before leaving this topic, it is worth pointing out that the skill descriptions used in profiles so far developed for the school or further education system presuppose, because of the context-free requirement, that there really are abilities or skills which can be applied equally within different contexts. Thus, in mathematics, skills are defined in terms of symbolic *mathematical* operations so that a child who can 'calculate a percentage', for example, presumably can do so in all practical contexts. What many researchers have realised is that such symbolically defined skills do not necessarily transfer from one situation to another, since performance depends upon disposition and motivation, for example, as well as competence, and indeed that the autonomous existence of a 'skill' is itself rather a slippery notion. It is arguable that this issue is fundamental to skill assessment and that if profiles ignore it their relevance will be greatly diminished.

14. This discussion has been mainly in terms of comparability, which is an attribute of assessment principally required by the selector (for employment, further or higher education) who wants to compare one individual with another. With formative profiles, comparison with others is less important; the record can then concentrate upon what the student has done, and under what conditions, so that the context is specified. The record can be cumulative, so that development of skills or their application in new contexts can be observed and discussed: the comparison is with the individual's own past and not with others' current performance. Reliance upon grades and grids is no longer necessary, and some schemes like the Record of Personal Experience (for details, see Burgess and Adams) consist only of the students' own accounts of their experiences (validated by an adult), without comment or judgement by the teacher.

15. In those schemes where a common framework is needed for the recording of judgements, valid, reliable and comparable assessment can be achieved only if assessors are trained to interpret the concepts used. Discussions of what is meant by the concept, the contexts or occasions in which it might manifest itself, and the evidence that would allow judgements to be made about the degree to which it is present, are all essential. Discussion followed by ratings of particular examples can generate a calibrated comment bank that will allow others to be trained more quickly in the use of a particular scale. (For more information about comment banks see Black and Dockrell). Nevertheless, as pointed out above, once assessments are required to reflect learning contexts, true comparability becomes elusive. This will almost certainly happen if individual teachers or lecturers rate their own students.

16. There have been few studies of the degree to which the different scales in the profile are assessing separate attributes. In Scotland it was found that teachers were reluctant and often unable to make distinct assessments of personal qualities like honesty,* while Stratton found that improvements on one attribute were almost invariably matched by improvements on another (e.g. 'working with

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*Goldstein, H. Models for equating test scores and for studying the comparability of public examinations. *Educational Analysis*, 4 (3), pp.107-118, 1982.

**Department of Education and Science *17 + : a new qualification*. HMSO, 1982

*SCRE' 1977. op. cit.

authority' and 'self awareness') though his findings were not consistent across his two samples of raters.* While more studies of this kind would be useful, one must accept that lack of discrimination between attributes may arise through the 'halo' effect, that is, the tendency of a rater's overall impression (favourable or unfavourable) of the student to influence all the individual ratings. More training of raters, especially more discussion of specific examples of behaviour, may well reduce the 'halo' effect and so convey more real information.

Scaling of profile elements

17. Whilst not all profile systems scale, if an employer or a teacher is offered a profile in which a number of disparate elements are each rated on a scale of 1-4 say, there is a clear invitation to compare the ratings. A student might be rated 1 (high) on 'planning a task' and also 1 on 'working with colleagues'. Yet if the former is applicable only to say 5 per cent of the population and the latter to 25 per cent it is difficult to see how the two ratings can be equated. Indeed, the only method of satisfactorily equating them is to define the ratings as applying to the same population percentages. Thus this would imply a direct 'norm-referencing' of the grades, and is again an issue which has been very little discussed. It is relevant to note the public examination boards' experience with equating grades in different subject areas. After some early work in the 1970s,** the attempt was abandoned once it was realised that this could be done only on a strictly norm-referenced basis as described above, thus violating the principle that the grading systems should not be solely norm-referenced.

18. There seems to be no good reason why there should be the same number of steps for each element. The number should be determined through experience and discussion so that the lowest should be in reach of all, and the highest, neither a ceiling which all reach nor a level which few reach. In some cases, there may be room for several intermediate steps, in others for one or even none. The Scottish Vocational Preparation Unit*** has drawn attention to the giant and uneven steps in many schemes, which could be avoided if the definitions of the scale points were generated by experienced practitioners familiar with the range of attainment in the population and using real examples of student behaviour.

19. Scaling done in this manner, leading to an appropriate number of steps for each element rather than forced into a uniform mould, might be less prone to invite inappropriate comparisons between ratings while, at the same time, leading to more attainable goals for students and lecturers.

Weighting and combining profile elements

20. The grid type of profile tends implicitly to give equal weight to each element, leaving the user to choose the subset on which she or he wishes to concentrate. Once this subset is selected, however, there is still an implied equal weighting so that the user, in the absence of specific guidelines, presumably will attach equal weight to the selected elements. Yet, for a variety of reasons this may be inappropriate. Some elements may be measured with low reliability (see later), some skills may effectively appear several times in slightly different guises, some assessments may have stronger validity than others, etc. In other words, the user generally needs more information about the profile other than the profile itself, just as the traditional test user should have access to information on reliability, validity, norms, etc. Yet, given the already large quantity of data supplied in some profile systems, the provision of such extra information seems somewhat daunting. Some research to study users' needs and the way in which they use the information supplied would be welcome.

21. The weighting problem becomes of crucial importance if a user is to aggregate all or a subset of the elements. Not only will the above considerations apply, but the user will have her or his own relative weights and some guidance would be useful. In the absence of such guidance, there is a danger that many users will, often inappropriately, average in some simple fashion the ratings, grades or scores.

22. Weighting and combining elements is particularly tempting if performance is recorded quantitatively, and the

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*Stratton, N. 1982a op. cit.

**Nuttall, D. L., Backhouse, J. & Willmott, A. S. *Comparability of standards between subjects* Schools Council Examinations Bulletin 29. Evans/Methuen Educational, 1974

***Scottish Vocational Preparation Unit, Op. cit.

temptation to make inappropriate combinations might be less in schemes where numbers are not attached to the descriptions of behaviour or evidence. The temptation to weight and combine elements is also reduced if each element does not have the same number of scale points.

Reliability

23. Quite a lot has been written about the reliability of grading systems, especially in public examinations[*] and it is now widely recognised that quite large measurement errors exist, so that there is a reasonably high probability that a student with a particular grade could have obtained a grade one or even two removed on a parallel examination, for example, one with a different set of questions or with a different marker. The reliability of the elements of a typical profile, often assessed subjectively or perhaps by means of a short skills test, could be very low, much lower than that of a public examination. Yet there is a negligible amount of serious effort devoted to studying this problem. Of course, as Macintosh says, validity is fundamental and we have already said something about that. However, if a very unreliable profile is interpreted too literally by a user, serious mistakes can occur. Consider, for example, the SLAPONS profile designed to communicate arithmetic skills to employers.[**] Each element has a 'score' of from 0 to 5, yet as with many conventional examinations, there is little indication of whether a difference of 1 or 2 or 3 score points between students or between elements is to be treated as meaningful or could be within 'measurement error'.

24. It is, of course, quite difficult to obtain estimates of measurement error (the standard error of measurement as it is known in the context of standardized tests) and the most popular traditional methods seem of little use.[***] The measurement errors can arise from a number of sources. There are differences between assessors or raters. There is variation in the tasks on which students are judged and there is variation in the response given by the student from day to day or situation to situation. Also, in a profile, some of these measurement errors may be correlated and their effects thus compounded.

25. Stratton studied the agreement between raters by asking them to place examples of behaviour on the profile scale.[*] There was consensus for 71 per cent of the examples, though for about a third of these the consensus may have been spurious. A sound consensus therefore emerged only with just less than half the examples. The raters were, however, inexperienced, and Stratton concluded that agreement might be much higher among trained, experienced raters. But this study shows the magnitude of error that may arise from just one source, and reinforces the need for considerable careful research in order to provide some indication of measurement error. For example, a set of confidence intervals, based on rough estimates, one for each element, could be devised so that judgement of differences would occur only for non-overlapping intervals. These could also, in principle, be incorporated visually onto a profile chart, as is often provided with standardized test batteries, and we would suggest that those who are preparing profiles pay particular attention to this possibility.

26. Drawing attention to measurement error is particularly important with summative profiles because of the importance of the decisions that might be made in the light of the information contained in them. With formative profiles, where irrevocable decisions can be avoided, lower reliability might be tolerated if an increase in reliability can only be achieved at the expense of validity. But it is likely that the techniques used to enhance reliability, like more training, the use of two or more raters or gathering more evidence, are also those that will enhance validity by promoting clarification and deeper understanding of each element in the profile. Thus we again return to the importance of collaborative development and operation of profile systems, in which training occurs through discussion and rating of examples, and where the possibilities and limitations of a profile system can be illuminated.

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[*] Willmott, A. S. & Nuttall, D. L. *The reliability of examinations at 16+*. Macmillan Education, 1975; Murphy, R. J. L. A further report of investigations into the reliability of marking of GCE examinations. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 52,* 1982 pp. 58-63.

[**] Pratley, B. Profiles in practice in *Profiles* FEU 1982.

[***] Ecob, R. & Goldstein, H. Instrumental variable methods for the estimation of test scoring reliability. *Journal of Educational Statistics, 8* Fall 1983 Vol. 8, No. 3.

[*] Stratton, N. J. *Reliability of basic skills profiles.* Paper given at the British Education Research Association 7th Annual Conference. St Andrews, 1982b.

Whither profiles?

27. We have, quite deliberately, emphasised the current technical shortcomings of profile research and implementation. We do so not because we wish to argue against profiling as such, in fact quite the contrary because we believe that profiles do have interesting potential. It is because we are concerned that a too ready acceptance of a technically weak system will ultimately be counter-productive when its deficiencies become apparent during use. As we have indicated, in the well established area of public examinations there are still considerable technical problems to overcome and in the sophisticated area of statistical test theory and psychometrics these controversies over fundamentals continue to rage. In both these areas, part of the case against the assessment techniques has rested on technical inadequacies. We are quite clear that the technical problems surrounding profiles are just as difficult as in these other areas and to ignore them would seem to be folly.

28. In our view, it would be wise to spend time now reflecting on these technical matters before too widespread and too rigid systems are developed. From a research point of view there is no doubt that there are considerable challenges, and in the areas of reliability, scaling, weighting and studying 'skills' it should be possible to make useful progress.

Graded tests

29. The graded tests movement shares many of the aims of the profiling movement, for example, a desire that education and assessment are seen as positive rather than negative experiences for all students, and a determination to put the curriculum first. Well-established in sport, music and other performing arts, graded tests are relatively recent arrivals in mainstream subjects of the secondary school curriculum, but have already made a dramatic impact upon the teaching and learning of modern languages and, in the Kent/Schools Council Mathematics Project, upon mathematics.

30. The basic idea of graded tests is not new and might be considered part of normal good practice. Phase tests in Technician Education Council (TEC) units, and indeed the TEC system of units at progressively higher levels (e.g. Maths 1, Maths 2, Maths 3), are straightforward examples of graded tests, where progress to the next level is contingent upon success at the previous level (a success that comes to most, if not all, students).

31. Yet graded tests have suddenly begun to attract a good deal of attention. The Cockcroft Report* has given graded tests – called 'graduated' tests there – further respectability and, in response to its recommendations, the DES has announced a substantial programme of research and development on graded tests in mathematics, principally for low attainers. Some of the modern language schemes are also designed principally for low attainers, but others are for the full ability range, as are most of the schemes in sport and the performing arts.

32. Perhaps the best known scheme (and certainly the oldest, founded some 100 years ago) is run by the Associated Board of The Royal Schools of Music. It attracted nearly 350,000 entries from the UK and Eire in 1980, an average of over 50,000 for each of the first five grades and sharply fewer (below 20,000) for the top three grades which involve a theory component as well as a practical. Each of the grades is designed to represent a defined standard of performance while the grades together form a progressive sequence of development in practical musicianship. The examination can be taken several times a year and the grades are not tied to particular ages, so that the scheme is tailored to the progress of each individual. Furthermore, as with sports, the choice of test items or pieces tends to be limited, with many elements, such as scales, known in advance.

33. Similar features, apart from the last, are characteristic of virtually all graded test schemes. In his review of graded tests (the most comprehensive and useful that is currently available), Harrison** encapsulates the essence of a typical graded test scheme in modern languages in three features:

'that it is progressive, with short-term objectives leading on from one to the next; that it is task-oriented, relating to the

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*Department of Education and Science. *Mathematics counts* (the Cockcroft Report). HMSO, 1982.

**Harrison, A. W. *Review of graded tests.* Schools Council Examinations Bulletin 41. Methuen Educational, 1982.

use of language for practical purposes; and that it is closely linked into the learning process, with pupils or students taking the tests when they are ready to pass.'

The curricular side of the schemes is especially significant in modern languages, where the movement is known as Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML) to emphasize that the guiding principle is in the development of a well-defined progression of educational objectives (building from the bottom upwards) rather than in the tests themselves.

34. Advocates of GOML schemes (of which there were about 60 in 1981, according to Harrison) point to the increased motivation of their pupils, with tangible proof given by dramatic increases in the proportion of third-year pupils opting for modern language courses in their curriculum in the vital fourth and fifth years. They also report that pupils and parents value the certificates issued for each grade.

35. Nevertheless, in most of what has been written about graded tests (as about profiles) there is little dispassionate evaluation, and it is therefore difficult to analyse what the key ingredients of their success in motivating pupils really are. One is almost certainly the short-term nature of the objectives allied to the principle of mastery learning and testing by way of criterion-referenced tests, which more than 90 per cent will pass in modern languages (and more than 80 per cent in music): that is, positive reinforcement, coupled with a tangible reward, at relatively frequent intervals (in contrast to public examinations where reward is stored until the end of five years of secondary education, and then is granted to the few rather than the many).

36. Another key ingredient is the enthusiasm of the teachers, sparked off, it would seem, by the curricular innovations of GOML. GOML schemes tend to be local and the teachers using the schemes have the chance to be involved in the further development of the schemes and in the assessment of their own pupils. This professional commitment is reminiscent of the early days of the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) examination, and may well be dissipated (as many would say has happened in the CSE) as the schemes become routine or are taken up by those who have not been party to the original development. In Oxfordshire, HM Inspectorate judged that in many schools there was still far to go in thinking about appropriate objectives for the less able, which stresses how difficult it is to translate laudable aims into effective classroom practice.*

37. The most common type of problem raised by GOML teachers in the survey conducted by Harrison was organizational, for example, a lack of secretarial help, additional demands on time or the organizing of the oral test themselves. But it is apparent that the organizational problems posed by individual rates of progress have largely been ducked by teachers, who have used the expedient of testing all pupils at about the same time. HMI are critical of this failure to meet what most would regard as one of the cardinal principles of masterly learning:

> 'On the whole, however, it [the use of Oxfordshire's graded test scheme] tends to be confined to the less able pupils who all take the test at the same time. . . . Even where groups have this measure of homogeneity it is clear that some pupils are being faced with too easy a test which for others is still too difficult. . . . Thus, while the original intention of a high pass-rate is achieved, the timing of testing is more often related to the age of the pupils than to their linguistic readiness'.

Sport and the performing arts tend to be taught either individually or in small groups not as closely linked to age as school year groups, and therefore avoid the problem of modern languages. But that problem is likely to be as acute in mathematics and other subjects for which graded tests are currently being proposed, namely science and English.

38. It is clear that the individualization of learning, something that is likely to be accelerated by the microprocessor, creates organizational problems for an individual teacher or lecturer within the normal institutional constraints. Those concerned with whole institutions, such as principals, heads and LEAs, need to consider the implications of the widespread introduction of graded tests, and at least one Chief Education Officer has already welcomed the implied break with the tradition of grouping

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*Her Majesty's Inspectorate. *A survey of the use of graded tests of defined objectives and their effect on the teaching and learning of modern languages in the County of Oxfordshire* DES, 1983 pupils by age and the possibility of grouping by attainment level or developmental stage instead.*

The curriculum and graded tests

39. Mansell remarked that 'profiling forces assessment into the learning process' (A burst of interest, in *Profiles* FEU, 1982); the worry of many is that graded tests will force assessment into the learning process not in the constructive way hoped for by Mansell, but in a destructive way that will lead to an excess of testing and to a backwash effect throughout the secondary school or further education curriculum that will make the backwash effect of the much maligned systems of examinations at 16+ look mild in comparison. Curriculum-led assessment may be a splendid concept when the agreed curriculum commands enthusiasm and support, as it manifestly does in modern languages, but where there is no agreed curriculum or where the field of study is not so vast that several different curricula are equally acceptable (as is the case of English), the particular subject curriculum that comes to lead the graded tests may be viewed by many teachers as a straitjacket. On the other hand, Pearce sees graded testing acting as a stimulus to sort out some of the problems of curriculum diversity:

'Graduated testing on any scale would expose the flaws in our position with painful clarity. The real need is a machinery to enable teachers to negotiate agreed curricula and institutionalize those agreements with a necessary minimum of validation. That is what has happened with BEC, and to a different extent with TEC, with on the whole very encouraging consequences as well as the inevitable protests of those in whom the loss of their chains induces a state of terror.'**

40. One way to guard against the worst sort of backwash is to ensure that the assessment procedures validly measure the full diversity of curricular objectives. That requirement almost certainly demands an impressive array of oral, practical and written assessments, as well as course work, projects and other extended exercises so that we should talk of graded assessments rather than graded tests. Couple these assessments with the need for at least two formal occasions of testing each year at each grade level, and one arrives at a substantial assessment industry that is viable only if the teachers themselves accept a major role in the assessment of their own pupils.

41. The technical issues in assessment of pupils by teachers have been studied extensively* and can be summed up in the two concepts of reliability and comparability. With criterion-referenced graded tests, achieving agreement about the criteria for marking among all those involved might be simpler than it is within traditional public examinations, but the variation in the conditions under which the tests are given and the variation in the tasks from school to school, and occasion to occasion, may wipe out any enhanced reliability of marking. Since there is a ready opportunity to retake a graded test, it might be argued that reliability of assessment is not as important as it is within the public examination system but this will depend upon the significance of the decisions made as a consequence of the test result.

42. There is a further fundamental difficulty which arises particularly acutely when a test can be retaken, namely the opportunity to learn, or teach to, the test itself, so that the curriculum will become distorted. To avoid this problem, tests would have to be changed between administrations and a moment's reflection will indicate the enormity of the task of continually developing new tests and equating them with the old, where testing takes place two or three times a year. The investment of time and expertise that this process requires is well represented in Holland and Rubin.** We are not aware that this issue has been faced seriously by the advocates of graded tests.

43. If mastery is in fact essential before a student can successfully work at the next level, then a false positive (a pass given when a fail should have been) may be as damaging as a false negative, which denies a student who is ready to move up the opportunity to do so. The consequences for individual students, especially at higher levels, where the results are more obviously for external consumption, may lead to too great an emphasis on

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*Brighouse, T. *Education*, 24/31 December 1982 p. 491.

**Pearce, J. The future of graded tests. *Education*, 17 June 1983. pp. 465-6.

*Cohen, L. & Deale, R. N. *Assessment by teachers in examinations at 16+*. Schools Council Examinations Bulletin 37. Evans/Methuen Educational, 1977

**Holland, P. & Rubin, D. (eds) *Test equating*. New York: Academic Press 1982 striving for high reliability. As with public examinations, the fear would then be that the demand for high reliability will overide the demand for validity. This tension appears to be a common feature of assessment systems, and the direction in which it is resolved tends to be a function of the significance of the decisions made on the test results. Open entry to higher education, for example as in the Open University, would reduce the significance of A-level grades.

44. Similar concerns arise with the pressure for comparability. The more standardization that is imposed on the quest for reliability and comparability, the greater the threat to the key features of graded tests. One area in which comparability might reasonably be sought is over the number of levels in a graded test scheme designed principally for the age range 11 to 16. Most of the modern language schemes have five levels, and the Cockcroft Report suggests between four and six. But in the first case, the five levels span the full ability range and five years of secondary education, while in the second the target is just low attainers from the age of 14 upwards.

Determining grade levels

45. What considerations are important in the choice of the number of levels and their positioning or spacing? Educational theorists are not in sufficient agreement in most fields to provide an answer, and so the choice will be guided largely by practical considerations such as balancing the value of frequent feedback to students with the desire to avoid excessive testing. How the grades of the graded tests might be linked to the grades of public examinations, most obviously those at 16+, if indeed such a link is either desirable or feasible, is also a matter for much discussion in the GOML movement as more and more schemes develop level 4 and 5 material (for more detail about these issues, see Harrison*, and Kingdom**).

46. Of more fundamental concern is whether the concept of *progression* from one grade to the next makes sense in many subjects of the curriculum. While almost all subjects are taught on a broad principle of progress, this progress is not tied to the linear development of an unvarying set of objectives and there are many different ways of progressing through the same syllabus. Mastery of the objectives at one level may, therefore, not be essential to the study of the objectives at the next level, and graded tests could easily become simply modular tests, that is, tests on self-contained content that can be taken in any order and whose material can be forgotten without apparent penalty after the test has been taken.

47. In practice, the lack of differentiation and individualization in education (and the Oxfordshire modern language schemes are probably typical in this respect) probably serves to make the *graded* part of GOML tests relatively insignificant: the important things are teacher enthusiasm and pupil rewards. A modular scheme might serve just as well. The most precious ingredient, therefore, becomes teacher enthusiasm, which puts a premium on local self-determination and involvement and argues against making national or regional comparability so important that the development of graded tests becomes simply another centralized assessment activity.

48. Another issue is whether attainment of a grade or level, particularly when specified in criterion-referenced terms, can satisfactorily be determined at the gross level of a subject or has to be at a much more disaggregated level as we have discussed earlier in the case of profiles. In public examinations Orr and Nuttall argue that true criterion-referencing and aggregation are incompatible, and the same arguments would seem to apply to graded assessments.* Harrison draws attention to the uneasy compromise between global certification and criterion-referencing that seems to be arising in some of the GOML schemes.** Dealing with more narrowly defined skills or domains may help to make the progression through the grades more obvious, and allows for some skills to be put into cold storage at some levels while new ones are introduced, thus adding more flexibility in those cases where there is no single route of progress. At the same time, reasonably reliable separate assessments of many skills at each level may magnify the testing load unbearably, especially for the assessor.

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*Harrison, A. 1982. Op. cit.
**Kingdom, J. M. *Graded tests*, paper presented at an informal seminar at the University of London Institute of Education 1983

*Orr, L. & Nuttall, D. L. *Determining standards in the proposed single system of examining at 16+*. Schools Council, 1983
**Harrison, A. 1982. Op. cit.

Profiles and graded assessments

49. Thus there are a number of common, or very similar, issues facing profiles and graded assessments. In particular, the choice of the elements or dimensions that should be assessed deserves much deeper thought and investigation. At present, the dimensions have been chosen for sound educational (curriculum-led) reasons but without much subsequent exploration of overlap and redundancy. Sometimes a single dimension embraces multiple objectives that are better separated. More careful specification of the objectives and the evidence needed to determine whether they have been successfully or partially achieved would clearly be beneficial, and could be followed after the event by the straightforward analyses used by Stratton[*] to detect redundancy (or possible 'halo' effect).

50. Deciding upon the number of reporting levels and the size of the steps is also a shared problem. Its solution must be rooted in the experience of teachers and lecturers whose knowledge of the typical performance and the range of performance in the particular population of pupils or students is vital. But too great a reliance on the norms of the past should be avoided; both profiles and graded assessments have stimulated unexpected improvements in motivation and attainment, and the definition of the steps should therefore be carried out in action rather than determined in advance.

51. This leads to the suggestion that more needs to be established about the effects of profiles and graded assessments upon students and lecturers. It was suggested above that the notion of 'grades' or 'progression' might be relatively unimportant and that the key ingredients were public rewards for the students and the enthusiasm of the teachers, but this is still speculative. Investigations of profile schemes in action (following Goacher, and Stratton) and evaluation of the new graded test developments are essential. This is particularly important where graded test schemes are being devised only for the 'low attainers', since the dangers of labelling in this procedure are only too obvious; there are, in any case, considerable but rarely discussed problems in actually defining, for example, the 'lowest 40 per cent of the ability range'.

52. Both profiles and graded tests make the curriculum that leads them much more obtrusive than the system of conventional examinations. The consequence is that, if lecturers and teachers are to preserve their freedom in choice of teaching strategy and examples relevant to the local context, both kinds of developments must be local rather than national (though a national *framework* is, of course, not ruled out). The inherent limitations in the concept of comparability must be exposed so that the advantages of formative assessment can be permitted to flourish.[*] But by putting emphasis on the local, the pressing need for training of assessors is also emphasized and made more urgent.

53. Although some profile schemes imply that each dimension is judged in the same way on a four-point scale, the evidence for the judgements can be of very different kinds, ranging from single subjective appraisals of personal qualities to cumulative test-based assessments of numerical skills. In the latter case, there is potentially a very obvious marriage of profiles and graded assessments.

54. It comes as no surprise, then, that profiles and graded tests are being brought together. The Cockcroft Report envisaged that performance in the graded tests might contribute to the kind of profile described above, an idea that has rapidly been taken up by a number of LEAs and examining bodies. For example, ILEA are proposing a 'London Record of Achievement', a portfolio containing details of examination passes, other achievements in school and a profile compiled by teachers, parents and the pupils themselves.[**] The portfolio will also contain the results of graded tests in mathematics, English, a foreign language (European or Asian), science, and design and technology, though development work has begun only in mathematics, English and science.

55. Even more advanced are the plans for the Oxford Certificate of Educational Achievement (OCEA), run by the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations (also responsible for GCE examinations) in conjunction with a number of LEAs including Oxfordshire, and the University Department of Educational Studies. The Certificate will have three components:

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[*] Stratton, N. 1982a op. cit.

[*] Goldstein, H. 1982. op. cit.; Orr, L. Nuttall, D. L. op. cit.

[**] Reported in *Education* 19 November 1982.

the P-component, a personal record or report of achievements;

the E-component, a record of public examination grades;

the G-component, a record of graded assessments in English, mathematics, modern languages and science.*

56. The principal contrast between graded assessments and profiles (anyway, in their record form rather than the grid form) lies in their stance towards quantification and measurement. Graded assessments are firmly within the psychometric tradition of tests and examinations, while the advocates of profiles are often against measurement and the reductionism and trivialization that all too often accompany measurement. So, in the union of profiles and graded assessments, we see the exciting prospect of bringing together the humanistic and quantitative traditions in educational asssessment. From this could emerge a most fruitful collaboration that could give a new rigour to humanistic assessment while preserving the pre-eminence of validity and curricular relevance.

57. To achieve this, action research is essential, integrating the development with the evaluation, and analysing the processes of selection, judgement and interpretation in the development and use of the assessments within the context of the college, school and workplace. While the technical issues we have discussed also need to be studied, what is *not* needed is the sort of detailed technical research of the type that has been done for 50 years on existing examination systems, largely atheoretical and motivated by a desire to provide merely technical answers to essentially educational problems. Just as the accent in assessment moves to stress its formative value rather than its summative use, so the research should develop so as to be sensitive to such changes.

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*Oxford Delegacy. *Oxford Certificate of Educational Achievement Newsletter:* Issue Number One. Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations, 1983a

Oxford Delegacy. *Oxford Certificate of Educational Achievement Newsletter:* Issue Number Two. Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations, 1983b

3. A Profile of Personal Qualities

Geoff Stanton

1. To report on what I intend to call the 'personal qualities' of young people is to enter a minefield. In this paper I shall attempt to analyse the issues involved, and shall also describe a strategy which I believe allows one to go forward without setting off explosions – either under the young people or under oneself.

What are these qualities?

2. The qualities I am referring to are many and varied. They may include 'moral' qualities such as *honesty*, or 'character traits' such as *reliability*. *Punctuality* is something on which comment is often requested by employers, so is *co-operativeness*. Universities, in the standard UCCA* forms, ask for comment on such qualities as *determination* and *independence of mind*. Some describe these qualities as 'attitudes', others request a 'character reference'. More recently, some qualities have been referred to as 'social and life skills'. The more theoretically minded may use the term 'affective domain' to describe the area in question. (There is often, however, ambiguity between affective and cognitive: does 'following instructions' mean ability to or willingness to?)

3. To an extent, of course, what they are called is merely a matter of taste, but only to an extent. There is also a sense in which differences in labelling reflect different views and assumptions as to the nature of the beast. A 'character trait' sounds a relatively permanent feature of an individual, though perhaps something which may be developed or overcome. A 'moral quality' seems an even more fundamental matter – whether a flaw or a virtue. Change is only possible through something akin to conversion. 'Attitude', on the other hand, is something which some institutions plan overtly to shape, as in the cases of attitude to authority and attitude to reading (though they are usually regarded as something to be caught rather than taught).

Bringing personal qualities into the curriculum

4. Although some people see the recent invention of social and life skills as ominous meddling, others see it as a liberating approach, in that it embodies the view that young people are not to be condemned because of a fundamental flaw which makes them (for instance) unreliable, but that they can be helped to acquire skills and experience which enable them to perform more competently.

5. I remember the story of a young employee on a Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP) scheme who was assigned to repair a pothole in a school playground, but who was on the point of being sacked because of a persistent failure to turn up at pre-arranged times to meet the caretaker. When these incidents were taken (as the jargon has it) as a learning opportunity rather than as a disciplinary matter, it was discovered that:

(a) it was his old school, and he both disliked the caretaker and was timorous about being seen performing a menial task by his old school mates;

(b) he completely lacked the techniques or strategies either for explaining this when tackled by his employer or for coping with his anxieties.

There are also cases of individuals who fail to turn up on time for interviews not (in their case) out of laziness, but because they are unable to plan journeys by public transport. Another common example is that of young people who (despite their public image) prove to be inflexible when they are required to change jobs or locations. This may be due to a lack of knowledge and experience, rather than innate conservatism. There is plenty of evidence to show that having a fuller understanding of their general environment – beyond that which it is essential to know – improves their approach immensely.*

6. What these examples also show is that, although the use of the term 'skills' may imply that performance can be improved by the right kind of learning, it is by no means the case that the learning in question is confined to practice of techniques.

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*Universities Central Council on Admissions.

*Wray, M., Moor, C., and Hill, S., *UVP: an evaluation of the pilot programme* NFER, 1980

Arguments for and against recording personal qualities

7. Some teachers argue that these kinds of personal qualities should not be recorded at all. Reasons given in support of this view are:

there is a risk of infringing the privacy of the individual;

the definition of the qualities, and the choice of them, is intensely value-laden;

judgements in this area are subjective and very unreliable;

only matters which form an overt part of the curriculum should be assessed;

personal comments often relate to interactions between the individual and others, rather than being descriptions of innate qualities and may reflect the qualities of the person commenting, as much as those of the student.

8. These are powerful arguments, but there are opposing ones. Personal qualities are, for many young people, their main strength. If these qualities matter, which they certainly do, and if they can be developed, which they certainly can, then we should plan to make them a real part of the curriculum. As well as affecting the approach we adopt to the learning process, this also means that we should work out the implications for assessment. Not to credit young people with (for example) their ability to work with others, whilst insisting on reporting on their lack of ability (such as in essay writing) would seem to be perverse.

9. To decide *not* to comment on values is, in itself, a significant value judgement. Many educational institutions have overt aims, stated in prospectuses or in the introduction to examination syllabuses, which they then fail completely to assess or reward. Does not this neglect reveal their true values?

10. Certainly the choice of what to comment on, and the style of comments, often reveal more about the reporter than those reported on. Precisely because the subjectivity is so evident, personal comments are read far less literally than other forms of assessment. Perhaps we should not under-estimate the recipient's ability to assess *our* ability to write reliable references. Whatever we may think, further and higher education tutors and employers *do* ask for comments on personal qualities. A refusal to give them is liable to be interpreted as the most negative kind of judgement. We do, therefore, make and offer such judgements, however subjective and unreliable, in the form of confidential references. Many unemployed young people are disadvantaged in not having anyone 'respectable' to provide a recent reference for them.

Can personal qualities be recorded?

11. Given all this, what might be the value of an open system for reporting on personal qualities – such as including certain items on a profile? Would this:

(a) make the preparation of the assessment more methodical, and improve fairness and rigour?

or might it

(b) give a misleading impression of reliability in assessment, and of the permanence of a student's strengths or weaknesses?

12. I believe that (a) is an important prize to be gained and that with an awareness of (b) we can avoid the worst of the pitfalls. Many of the dilemmas I have attempted to describe above may be substantially resolved if the learner is made aware of the areas to be commented on, and if the comments are made openly, with an opportunity for the student to discuss them and to register disagreement if necessary. The process of profiling provides a basis for this necessary negotiation between teacher and learner.

Profiling

13. Profiling is, of course, merely a method of displaying the results of assessment. It is not, in itself, a method of assessment, and can be no more valid or reliable than the methods it reflects. Profiling does, however, have certain distinctive features.

(i) It can record attainment and progress in quite different areas of learning, for which the appropriate methods of assessment will be similarly variable.

(ii) It can usefully credit achievement or qualities not measurable by formal testing. When it does so, these factors will often have been subjectively assessed. Though subjective, the assessment can still be *methodical* and the profile itself is neither objective or subjective. In another section of the profile (for example 'calculations') the method of assessment may have been highly objective.

(iii) It is designed as an aid to learning, not just as an end of course report. It needs, therefore, to be completed in conjunction with the learner.

(iv) It enables evidence from different sources (not just teachers) to be taken into account. Thus the views of work supervisors would be considered, and perhaps peer group assessments also.

As a result of these (in my opinion) virtues, the process has attracted several criticisms which need to be dealt with before the strategy I advocate is described.

Criticisms of profiling

14. Profiling is often criticised for what it *reveals* (the 'shoot the messenger' syndrome). For example, it may reveal that staff cannot agree – and presumably never have done – on what is meant by (say) 'initiative' or what is required in terms of 'an ability to present a point of view'. The *profile* is not unreliable; rather, it has revealed unreliability.

15. Because it demystifies the assessment process, profiling encourages discussion and argument amongst staff and students. Candidates do not argue about (say) receiving 65 per cent in an examination because they are unsure about what their mark means. (Which 65 per cent can I do? Am I completely competent at 65 per cent of tasks, or moderately competent at all of them? What criteria are used to define 'competence'?) They are not usually allowed to see and discuss the evidence or even the marking scheme.

16. Because profiling is an innovation, it is expected to meet criteria which traditional approaches have always failed to achieve. For instance, critics often raise the question of whether a given profile could mislead the user. The student may regress subsequently, or a particular performance may turn out to have been a 'flash in the pan'. The problem of a skill or ability decaying is a real one, but one from which traditional examination results are hardly immune. My ability at O level Latin scarcely survived the examination day. There is certainly not much trace left now but, more than two decades later, I still record the 'pass', by request, on application forms.

17. In some respects, this aspect of a profile is similar to the creation of a *structured reference*. Many conventional requests for references ask referees to structure their replies under certain headings. An example is UCCA which asks for comments on what it refers to as 'personal qualities', from referees who are supporting a student's application for a university place. An extract from the guidance notes follows:

Personal qualities of the candidate

From your knowledge of the candidate's achievements, interests and personality, please make your comments where possible under the following headings:

- Powers of analysis
- Powers of expression, both oral and written
- Ability to present a coherent argument
- Imagination, creativity, inventiveness
- Independence of mind
- Initiative
- Industry, determination, perseverance
- Reliability and sense of responsibility, positions of responsiblity held
- Breadth of interests including hobbies, sports, involvement in youth organisations and clubs
- Social abilities and personal relations: contribution to the community.

18. Some of the UCCA headings might be classified as skills rather than personal qualities, but many do fall into the area I have been considering. It might well be that, by using the UCCA headings as part of a *profiling process*, validity, reliability and contribution to student learning could all be improved. You can check this by testing the applicability of the principles I offer below to the UCCA headings, as well as to qualities referred to in other profiles or reporting systems. I believe the check will show that the problems we face are not new, are not confined to the 'new FE', and that possible ways of tackling the problems are relevant to traditional systems of evaluation, and not confined to 'upstart' student profiles.

Suggested principles

The qualities on which a student is to be assessed should be made clear at the start of the course.

19. Profiles enable this kind of assessment to be made. If their use produces debate about whether the right qualities are being reported on, or what is meant by them, or what evidence is to be taken into account, then surely that is healthy? Confidential references avoid these debates only by keeping their headings secret, or by being unstructured and idiosyncratic. If universities have a legitimate interest in knowing about initiative or social abilities then it is only fair to let students know this in time for them to do something about it. 'Doing something' may involve making an attempt to improve, or making sure that existing evidence is available to the assessor.

Comment on personal qualities should be made at regular intervals during the course, and not be left to the end.

20. Without such feedback during the course, the learner is unable to develop a shared perception of the nature of the quality, the criteria being used to judge it, or how she/he appears to others. The learner is unlikely, therefore, to improve or to see the reason for trying to do so. On the other hand, students are often found to be underestimating their progress, and therefore getting unduly discouraged. Reporting en-route may also reveal that the course is not providing opportunities to demonstrate or develop certain abilities/qualities, or that the assessor is not aware of all aspects of a student's performance. How often has a referee (UCCA or otherwise) realised too late that they have not enough knowledge or evidence on which to base a comment they are being asked to make?

Comments made should be discussed with the student and, if possible, agreed. If agreement is not possible, the student should be allowed to record a dissenting view, or have the right to ask for a second opinion.

21. This encourages care and a methodical approach on the part of the teacher, and militates against vindictiveness or simple bias. It is very similar to the procedure agreed between unions and management for performance reviews in many industries and in the civil service. (I am sure that it is the least that teachers would insist on if their performance were ever to be reviewed.)

22. This procedure also has an important educational purpose. It helps the student to develop the ability to assess him or herself, a crucial step towards autonomy. Many education processes leave the student dependent upon the teacher for judgements of attainment or progress.

Care must be taken not to cause the reader of a profile report to overestimate the objectivity or reliability of judgements made in this area.

23. This can happen by accident – for instance by presenting the assessment in the same format as a comment on, for example, numeracy. For this reason, I do not think that ticking a choice of standard descriptors should be the approach used. This may be appropriate for numeracy, though even here ensuring that the descriptors are sufficiently comprehensive or in the right sequence can be difficult. If used for personal qualities it creates both a misleading impression of the uniformity of the assessment, and – in my experience – causes teachers to spend more time arguing about what descriptor is closest to the one they want to use than on deciding what the student is actually like.

24. It must be said that, if left to themselves, not all teachers make full or clear comments (the 'could do better' syndrome). A compromise might be to allow a 'write in' comment in the relevant part of the profile, and to offer, in a staff handbook, a range of suggested descriptors or a checklist of possible features to look out

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for.* A handbook, which discusses (with examples) teachers' views on the criteria they adopt and the standards they expect, can also aid consistency.

25. A percentage mark would not be at all appropriate, and some would argue that even to have the comments produced in the form of a computer printout may be to lend a spurious air of precision and permanence to the judgement. I would not go this far, but . . .

The profiles should be dated, and the fact that the report refers to a particular phase in an individual's development should be emphasised.

For example, 'was frequently late to college during final year' rather than 'is unpunctual'. This strategy has the added advantage of removing some of the subjectivity from personal comments by recording the actual experience rather than making generalised comments about it.

A value judgement should not be disguised as anything else, and the contributor should be made known.

26. If possible the reader should be left to judge the comments. This is an interesting discipline. 'Appeared bored by my lessons' sounds rather different from 'inattentive'. If the raw evidence on which a judgement might be based is presented, the readers can draw their own conclusions. This is often the case, of course, with comments such as 'captained first XV' but what about 'led student sit in', or 'runs window cleaning business'? Some examples may be more enlightening to the reader than to the teacher, and not always in the same way.

27. A further aspect of this approach is to concentrate on describing what the student *has* done, and to be more circumspect about saying what she/he *can* or *could* do. This is certainly appropriate as far as profiles are concerned but, in less structured references, judgements on future potential are often asked for and given.

Make the report the student's property, to be used or not as she/he thinks fit.

28. This principle is, of course, not quite straightforward. Employers and others may be suspicious if they are not shown a profile which they know exists (although students might legitimately not produce out-dated profiles). On the other hand, I have often found that students are less sensitive about what is in their reports than are teachers on their behalf.

Conclusion

29. I would argue that evaluation of and comments on personal qualities should be included in profiles because:

(a) they may be the most creditworthy aspects of some young people, and more relevant for some purposes than academic attainment;

(b) if they are not included, they will almost certainly be *either* assumed by employers and others, *or* provided confidentially by teachers – but much less methodically and with a greater risk of unfairness (often the young person does not have a choice of who writes the references, the enquirer decides);

(c) their formative use, during the course in order to influence it, may create learning opportunities that would otherwise be missed, thus ensuring the acceptance of this area of learning as part of the curriculum.

30. Admittedly there are dangers. However, I believe these can be reduced by adopting rigorous and open *procedures* and by making it clear that the *product* is not of the same kind as that resulting from an evaluation of other areas such as numeracy or dexterity.

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*See Gloria Hitchcock's discussion of Comment Banks in Section 6.

4. Developing the Profilers

Barbara Pearce

Introduction

1. There have been few innovations in education which have required so much of teachers, in the way of new attitudes and more effective skills, than profiling. For this reason alone it is important that staff development is taken seriously. This paper is one view of the factors which contribute to effective staff development. It is essentially a practical paper directed towards those who have responsibility for promoting profile systems. It is based upon varied experience of training for profiling and is concerned with staff development in its widest context. Training is considered under the following headings:

- Information Giving
- Awarness Raising
- Skill Training.

Finally, the paper assumes that the profiling systems under consideration are developmental as well as summative and that young people are involved in the process of producing their own profiles.

2. The majority of teachers entering schools and colleges are expected to have acquired the expertise to make judgements about the progress and potential of their students. It is assumed that, with minimum guidance and support, they will assess, mark and report upon work that is produced. In the early years, most teachers' energies have to be devoted to learning the craft of teaching. Any doubts about assessment methods are soon set aside. Since most assessment and reporting is not integrated into a course, the time pressures make it almost impossible to indulge in challenging the system while there are students, employers and others awaiting results. It is not surprising, therefore, that little attention has been given to providing staff development for improving assessment and reporting practice. With the development of profile systems all the unanswered anxieties and doubts about assessment, recording and reporting have re-emerged. This means that any staff development concerned with good profiling practice has to take into account lack of training in the past. In addition, there are many industrial supervisors, without an educational background, who require training. Both groups need to understand how profiles relate to traditional reports and the many issues related to assessment. Finally, staff need to gain confidence and understanding of the mechanics involved.

3. Staff development in this field is concerned with answering the following questions:

What is profiling?

Why do we need it?

How do we do it?

Who is involved?

How does it fit with what we do already?

Who can help us?

4. There is no one correct approach; different institutions and staff will respond best if their specific needs are taken into account. It is important, however, that a coherent strategy is adopted which allows needs to surface and which provides a clear focus for meeting those needs. Probably the best way of doing this is to have a specific person nominated within an institution to facilitate the staff development necessary for profiling. This person may, of course, consider this as only one of the many areas for which she/he is responsible, but the success of implementing and maintaining a profiling system could well depend upon the priority given to this aspect of work, particularly in the beginning.

Managing change

5. It is vital to recognise the fundamental nature of the changes involved in adopting a profiling system. This means that the first staff development task is managerial. The appointment or nomination of an individual to take responsibility for training and support is one way of indicating to staff that there is organisational support for the new system from the top. If the designated person holds a sufficiently senior post and is respected by staff there will be more confidence in profiling. Moreover, other development strategies will be futile without management sensitivity to changes which might be necessary within the institution if profiling is to be effective. It is to these managers that much of this paper is addressed.

INFORMATION GIVING: A PROPOSED MODEL

6. In every school or college there are as many ideas and opinions about profiling as there are people. Fantasies, facts and half truths abound. It is preferable, therefore, that as many staff as possible have access to information giving sessions. This applies equally to staff in the institution who are actually using a profiling system and staff who will not be involved directly but who will have some contact with students. One method of promoting success in a profile information session is, first of all, to allow discussion of some of the audience's concerns about the system.

Discussion

7. This can be done in a number of ways but a simple expedient, even for a large group, is to ask people to talk to the person sitting next to them about the profile systems. After about five minutes, the discussion is stopped and people are invited to share their thoughts with the whole group. These can be written up using an overhead projector, blackboard or large sheets of paper.

Issues arising

8. From experience of using this method the following issues might be predicted:

nature of profiling;
relationship with assessments/reports;
subjectivity/objectivity;
student involvement;
reliability;
acceptability to employers etc;
norm or criterion referencing;
collaboration with other staff;
suitability for whole ability range;
time required;
skills of tutor;
monitoring.

In addition, there are likely to be some concerns specific to the institution in question. There are two reasons for collecting together these issues. The first and more obvious reason is that, by doing so, the speaker is able to respond to the points and to check that they have been answered before the end of the session. Probably just as importantly, however, members of the audience are at once more involved in the process of the session and are alerted to focusing on their particular concerns. Even the few minutes discussion with a partner will have helped each individual to reflect upon his or her state of knowledge and degree of enthusiasm, apathy or curiosity. Such a process enables participants to move from generalisations to specific and personal statements. For example:

from: 'Staff cannot be expected to take on anything more like these profiles!'

to: 'I do not see how any time can be found to do all the work necessary.'

It is possible to adopt a problem solving approach towards the second statement whereas the first, being about attitudes, presents greater difficulties.

Input

9. Once clear about the issues related to the introduction of profile systems the speaker can respond more appropriately to the audience. Apart from meeting the needs of a specific audience, an information giving session may need to cover the following:

description of the profile systems to be considered;
why profiling is to be used;
when it will be used;
pilot study findings/background to profiling;
areas still negotiable;
training to be offered;
other support available;
question and answer session.

The list above is not necessarily exhaustive, and individual speakers will have particular points which they wish to emphasise. Once the content of this type of session has been determined, the list of 'do's and don'ts' in Figure 1 can be a useful guide to good practice.

Do's	Don'ts
Do prepare well.	Don't try to use an overhead projector alone to show a grid profile system. There is usually too much information for this medium to be appropriate.
Do make sure everyone has a copy of a profile.	
Do give a flavour of any pilot study findings.	Don't present reams of statistical tables which are likely to confuse rather than clarify.
Do relate the profiling system to the work of the audience. i.e. 'This is how reviews could be carried out in this college . . .'	Don't rush through too much information in too short a space of time.
Do give background information about how profile systems were developed and why, plus latest 'state of the art'.	Don't make the talk so theoretical that teachers cannot imagine the system in use with their students.
Do answer questions directly and admit if you don't know the answer.	

Figure 1 Suggestions for an Information Giving Session

10. Finally, where a staff developer has decided to call upon the services of an external trainer, the content list (in paragraph 9) and the 'do's and don'ts' (Figure 1) can be useful aids to the negotiation of a clear contract. This will result from the staff developer being sure of what is required and the trainer being able to be specific about his/her skills and experience for such a session.

AWARENESS RAISING

11. So far, using the suggested model, staff would have been given a detailed explanation of what is involved in a profile system and would have had an opportunity to ask questions about the content of the system and the organisational aspects of introducing it in a particular school or college. Being clear about what is involved in profiling systems will probably help resolve any confusion that exists, but may do little to strengthen staff confidence, develop skills or confront negative attitudes. It is difficult to encourage skill development in staff who are apathetic, suspicious or hostile. Many of these feelings are aroused because profiles are new and potentially threatening. They are being introduced at a time when many other changes are occuring and when, in some sectors, morale is at a particularly low ebb. In contrast, there are teachers who are totally committed to the 'cause' and who are very enthusiastic about the changes in traditional practice which might be involved. These two extremes tend to reinforce each other: in consequence there may be little dialogue between them. At worst, a climate develops in which only one party can win. It is to such attitudes and feelings that an Awareness Raising course is addressed.

Participative or structured approach?

12. It is suggested that, for awareness raising, participative rather than didactic methods are employed. A passive audience may feel unable to be open about feelings and may be reluctant to express opinions, or even to ask those questions to which they want the answers.

This can serve to heighten any negative feelings. To some people, participative methods imply an unstructured, open-minded approach. If there is plenty of time such a method might be appropriate. It is, however, much more likely that time is limited and it is essential, therefore, that all participants feel that it has been well spent. Structuring the course increases the likelihood of this.

Content and method

13. An Awareness Raising workshop aims to reconcile the needs of the participants with what it is possible to offer. This has a number of implications. Since participants are to be asked to work together, they must have an opportunity to get to know each other. A method of enabling their needs to surface must be developed within the context of the planned programme. In order to introduce participants to some of the processes involved in profile systems, methods being used in the workshop should mirror, as far as possible, those to be used by teachers involved with such systems. There should be an opportunity for staff to consider the relationship between profiling and traditional practices. These implications can be dealt with in many different ways and the programme outlined below should be viewed as only one possibility.

Introduction to course and trainer (15 minutes)

14. The trainer introduces him/herself, giving relevant biographical details, followed by a preview of the programme and its objectives:

(a) to provide an opportunity to consider how profiling relates to traditional methods of assessment and reporting;

(b) to understand what using a profile system with students would be like;

(c) to provide an opportunity for discussion of the issues surrounding profiling;

(d) to consider the application of profiling to individual work situations.

Getting to know each other (20 minutes)

15. Although it is important for participants to get to know each other, they are likely to become frustrated if they are not also progressing towards meeting the stated objectives of the programme. The following exercise enables this to happen:

(a) each person is asked to find a partner. They are asked to introduce themselves and to spend five minutes discussing their experience of assessment and reporting;

(b) each pair joins another pair, making groups of four. Each person, in turn, spends two minutes introducing his/her partner to the new pair and outlining his/her experience of assessment and reporting;

(c) the groups separate into pairs and face the trainer for new instructions.

N.B. This exercise not only enables each individual to get to know everyone but, more importantly, it helps to develop a climate in which sharing and learning together is the norm.

Expectations exercise (20 minutes)

16. This exercise is comprised of:

(a) Individual work

Each person notes down what he/she hopes to get out of the programme

(b) Pairs sharing

Partners share what they have written and discuss anything they do *not* want from the workshop

(c) Large group sharing

The trainer asks the whole group to present their needs. These are listed on a blackboard or on large sheets of paper. Anything which is not wanted is listed on another sheet. The needs are then discussed with reference to previously stated objectives. The trainer clarifies what is negotiable, what is non-negotiable and where particular needs can be met. From experience, the most frequently mentioned 'non-needs' are: 'being lectured', 'jargon', and 'learning nothing new'.

A major advantage of this exercise is the opportunity it provides for the trainer to refer to specific needs during the workshop.

Background to profiling (30 minutes maximum)

17. Although, ideally, all participants will have attended an information session, in practice, for some people the Awareness Raising Workshop will be their introduction to profiling. For this reason it is important, at this stage, to summarise the background to profiling.

Processes of profiling

The Clapping Game (minimum 1 hour 30 minutes)*

18. This exercise is designed to:

(a) provide an experience relating to different types of recording/assessment systems;

(b) focus on the concerns of students as they experience the different types of recording/assessment systems;

(c) raise awareness of:
the need to involve students in their own assessment in order to decide the most appropriate area for learning;
the attitudes involved in assessment; and
the skills required by the teacher in involving students in their own assessment/learning.

This exercise is concerned with assessing a simple task in a number of different ways. The task is irrelevant, it is the assessment and recording processes which are important. Clapping is the chosen assessment task since it is easy to perform, does not require equipment and is unlikely to cause much embarrassment to those who perform the task. Any other task which fulfills the above criteria would be equally suitable.

19. Five volunteers are asked to form an assessment panel and another six are asked to volunteer to perform the task, in this case a clap. See Figure 2 overleaf. The final volunteer is told why she/he is being asked to clap and why it is considered a task important enough to assess. This volunteer is asked to review previous experience of clapping and to think about what criteria are relevant to assessing a clap. These criteria can then be compared with those on any profile which is known to the participant and the profile amended if necessary. The volunteer then claps and the assessment level is discussed and agreed between trainer and volunteer.

20. It is important to remind the whole group – whether observing, assessing or clapping – of the different processes which have been experienced. For example, the coping with rejection or frustration; the generation of criteria and the justification for them; and the negotiation of agreement. Each process is discussed individually, focussing on the feelings and opinions of the volunteers. This should allow participants to reflect upon their past experience of assessment and reporting, both as teachers and learners.

Application to work

21. It is vital to provide opportunities for participants to consider how any learning can be transferred to individual work situations. One way to do this is as follows:

(a) Individual work (10 minutes)

Each person answers these questions in writing:
What has been significant about this workshop?
How does this relate to your work situation?
Who and what could help you apply any learning to your own work situation?
What problems might you face?

(b) Work in pairs (20 minutes)

Partners take it in turn to discuss their answers with each other and to use their partner to think through any problems they might face.

(c) Plenary (10 minutes)

This whole group session is provided so that any remaining issues can be discussed with everyone present. This sometimes helps those who have not foreseen either ways of applying the learning or obvious difficulties.

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*This exercise was developed as part of the dissemination phase of the Manpower Services Commission project 'Trainee Centred Reviewing' and can be obtained from the Counselling and Career Development Unit, 22 Clarendon Place, Leeds University, Leeds LS2 9JT.

Volunteer	**Method of assessment by panel**
Person No. 1 is asked to clap.	After saying 'thank you', no further notice is taken of this volunteer.
Person No. 2 is asked to clap and then to leave the room.	Each member of the assessment panel is asked to score the clap individually on a 1-5 scale, 1 being low, 5 high. An average score is calculated but not given to the volunteer when she/he returns to the room.
Person No. 3 is asked to clap and then to leave the room.	The panel assesses as previously, but this time the volunteer is given the score when she/he returns.
Person No. 4 is asked to clap and then to leave the room.	The assessment panel asseses the clap according to the criteria of a 'National Clapping Profile'. The criteria are: volume, creativity and appropriateness. A copy of this is given to the volunteer.
Person No. 5 is asked to clap and then to leave the room.	The panel is given 10 minutes to design its own clapping profile and to assess volunteer No. 5 against the criteria in this profile. A copy is given to the volunteer.

Figure 2 Clapping

SKILL TRAINING

Practical skill training

22. Practical skills relate to the mechanics of profiling – skills involved in organising time and people, making accurate observations and carrying out effective recording.

(i) Time management

Effective profiling, in that it brings assessment into the classroom, inevitably involves some reorganisation of staff time. Some of the strategies for this will be the responsiblity of management, but some will rest with tutors in determining how to structure student contact time so that both the paper work and individual reviews can be completed.

(ii) Observation skills

Profiling requires staff to observe closely the progress of individual students. Teachers traditionally have been good at noting deficiencies in learning, in order to take remedial action. Time and training are needed to develop the ability to use appropriate methods for observing and measuring achievement. It is this aspect of profiling which seems to be a problem for many staff and for which earlier training sessions may not have prepared them (see paragraph 24).

(iii) Recording skills

These have been called 'paper skills'. Teachers sometimes have difficulty in writing down and recording their observations of student progress and achievement. It is not enough to observe that a student is making progress, it is vital to be able to make a specific statement about the stage an individual has reached within the context of the work done. For example:

not John has made steady progress this month with his typing *but* John is able to tabulate a typewriter accurately and his typing speed has increased to 20 words per minute.

(iv) Team management

Course profiles require not just the recording of achievements but the co-ordination of evidence from different areas of provision. This, in turn, demands the ability to collate information from a wide range of sources – both staff and student – often in more than one institution. Administrative techniques for collating and distilling information have to be developed, as do strategies for co-ordinating a course team so that aims and methods are shared. Profiling may well reveal problems such as disagreements between staff (as to criteria for assessment, or over the uses and extent of negotiation) which can be solved only by working towards clear and shared team goals.

23. Since many practical issues are common to all the course team within a given institution and since a co-ordinated approach is vital, providing appropriate staff development may also provide an opportunity to increase team cohesion. Before the course starts, the team could be brought together to consider what practical issues they think will emerge both for themselves as individuals and as a team. The staff development officer or course tutor could then encourage discussion of possible solutions and present additional suggestions. Practical skills are probably best developed by ongoing training, based on discussion. Opportunities for staff to discuss the practical problems of profiling will be a source of continued development and of informal feedback to each other.

24. One approach is to ask a course team to practise the various elements of the profiling process in its different stages during the course and then to hold discussions on the basis of their experience. Another method is simply to ask staff to exchange profiles or review sheets and to use a case history approach to discuss given profiles. Either method may lead to further practical work in, for example, developing reliability of assessment within the team. This type of provision has more flexibility than formal training sessions and is more responsive to the practical issues which are specific to a given institution. It is also likely that there will be other problems which are shared by different institutions. Inter-institutional discussions seem to provide real support for staff who use them, partly, to check out how much practices in different institutions vary.

Interpersonal skill training

25. Interpersonal skills are emphasised frequently as being necessary to good profiling practice: they are needed for working with staff as well as with young people. Good teachers have always used these skills but it is possible to make a passable attempt at teaching without developing them to a very high standard. Good profiling practice makes such skills essential. What are the skills which are so vital to the process of profiling? They are given many different names but, at their most fundamental, include:

the ability to make and maintain relationships;
the ability to listen;
the ability to give and receive feedback.

Participative training with opportunities for practice and feedback helps each staff member to become more effective when working with others. The very practice of profiling helps to develop interpersonal skills but the process can be considerably speeded up by effective training which has a wider application than profiling alone. The skill of the tutor in a profiling relationship with a student is vital in determining the attitude of the young person towards the process.

26. To be effective, training has to be related to the specific profile system and organisation of an individual school or college. It must also be designed to meet the needs of individual teams and their members. If this is not possible, courses in counselling skills may help, but staff must be able to apply their learning within the profile system. Providing counselling training can sometimes be confusing if there is not adequate preparation and debriefing. It is certain that the skills outlined above are valuable in personal counselling sessions, but that is not the focus in profiling. Frequently, there will be individual staff who have counselling training and who find themselves involved in personal counselling sessions. There is, however, no need for others to feel they also have to do this.

27. The generic skill required is the skill of *reviewing,* that is helping young people to focus on past experience, present situation and feelings, and future potential. This is done within the context of work which has taken place and progress made since the last occasion on which student

and tutor met. Being clear about this need for a reviewing skill rather than for counselling removes a great deal of fear and defensiveness from staff who feel inadequately prepared for counselling.

28. One way for staff to practise interpersonal skills is to simulate a practical situation in which some are tutors and some are students. This may be done in the following way:

Stage 1 Divide staff into small groups and designate one person as tutor to each group. Set a practical task for the group to accomplish, for example:

laying a table;
filing documents;
building Lego models;
building a tower using available materials.

It is the tutor's job to observe the task and to note how individuals within the group perform on as wide a range of criteria as possible. Give a time limit for completion.

Stage 2 When the time allotted for the task has passed, ask individual group members to record what they have been doing and what they have contributed to the completion of the task in social, as well as practical terms.

Stage 3 Ask individuals to assess themselves, on whichever form of profile is currently used in the institution. They must be able to justify their assessments with evidence from the exercise.

Stage 4 All members of the group in turn share their assessment with the rest of the group, giving their justification each time. The rest of the group, and in particular the tutor, gives them feedback on their assessment, again justifying comments with evidence.

This exercise helps staff to recognise that disagreements about assessments should be minimised if evidence for the assessment has to be given each time it takes place. Also, if there is disagreement, it is less likely to be seen as a personal attack and a problem solving approach to the issue can be adopted.

Students and profiling

29. In considering staff development for profiling, it is essential to recognise that students also need skills if they are to achieve the maximum benefit from the system. This is particularly true for their diary/logbook completion and for their review sessions with a member of staff.

Diary/logbook completion

30. One way of helping students to recognise the importance of completing diaries or logbooks is to work with them in small groups. The member of staff points out that diaries/logbooks will provide the basis of evidence for completing profiles. They will also provide part of the information for discussion at review sessions. The students can then be asked to think about what it will be important to include. If they note down their individual comments these can be used for discussion. From the discussion a list of important points can be agreed and written on a large sheet of paper. It would, of course, be possible for the staff member to give this list from the beginning. The purpose of involving students in creating the list is to help them to take responsibility for the content. In this way they are more likely to be committed to work out the elements in their list.

Individual reviews

31. Students have not, traditionally, been involved in their own assessment or reporting. This means that many young people find it difficult. Some staff have cited this as an objection to the profiling system. In fact, in helping students to acquire the necessary self-assessment skills, staff are enabling them to develop an ability which will be of use in the future. The interpersonal skills of value to students are similar to those needed by staff (see paragraph 28). For example, to be able to talk naturally and openly about individual progress and achievement is useful in seeking jobs and in other social situations. There are many exercises which could be used to develop listening and oral skills. The following is one possibility.

Listening and oral skills exercise

32. *Stage 1* Ask for five volunteers. Everyone else observes. Tell the volunteers that they will each in turn be told a story which they will repeat to the next volunteer.

Read a short story to volunteer No. 1, while the other volunteers are out of the room. Bring in volunteer No. 2.

No. 1 repeats the story to No. 2
No. 2 repeats the story to No. 3
No. 3 repeats the story to No. 4
No. 4 repeats the story to No. 5.

The last volunteer repeats the story to the whole group. The trainer then reads out the original as a comparison.

Stage 2 The group are now asked to think about the skills necessary for good listening and oral communication. These are listed and discussed.

Students can be given practice in discussing their progress in the same way as that outlined for staff, that is, by using any practical task as the basis for a discussion on individual progress (see paragraph 28). If students practise with one another they have more confidence in their discussions with staff. In particular, they can be asked to focus on disagreements about achievement and on the skills necessary for negotiation.

Conclusion

33. Training can take place within the institution or outside and may be conducted by internal staff or by external trainers. Each method may be effective or ineffective depending upon how appropriately and expertly the sessions are designed and conducted. It is important to consider both individual and team needs and the timing of a particular event. *Most important of all, it is essential to consider the purpose of any form of staff development for profiling and to tailor the event to meet that purpose.* However good the training, however good the profile system to be adopted, little will be achieved if the major component of staff development, in the form of ongoing support for each member of staff, is absent. However this support is provided, it needs to include both time and space for staff to work through problems, and the determination to effect change, in order for the staff operating any profiling system to feel as valued as the students who are its subjects.

5. National Developments

Student Profiles in Connection with BEC Courses[1]

Peter Davies

Introduction

1. The Business Education Council (BEC) still has no formal requirement for student profiles to be used in connection with any courses leading to BEC Awards offered at approved centres. Nevertheless, since the introduction of BEC awards in 1978, there has been encouragement to centres to adopt a form of profiling as a means of monitoring effectively the performance of students in relation to the course objectives.

Assessment and BEC course objectives

2. The content of BEC courses is defined in terms of module specifications rather than subject syllabuses. The module specifications are set out in the form of General and Learning Objectives as illustrated in the extracts in Figure 1. When the system of General, National and Higher National Awards was introduced in 1978, the Council emphasised that assessment of students should be undertaken continuously by means of practical

The World of Work — Module 3*

9.1 AIMS:

9.1.1 to develop an understanding of the nature and functions of differing types of organisation in order for students to be able to relate the part played by their organisations within the total business and social environment;

9.1.1 to develop an understanding of the structure and function of typical organisations in order for students to understand the interrelationship between departments and procedures and therefore be able to relate their function to the function of their organisation as a whole;

9.1.3 to help students to acquire an ability in basic office skills.

9.2 GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

On completion of the course, students should be able to:

A. be aware of the different types of organisations;
B. appreciate the differing roles and objectives of organisations;

9.3 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

On completion of the course students should be able to:

A. be aware of the different types of organisations;
A1 state the type and purpose of the different organisations in the public and private sectors.

B. appreciate the differing roles and objectives of organisations;
B1 show what features typify each organisation and how they differ from each other;
B2 compare and contrast the main functions of the public and private sectors.

Figure 1 Extracts from *BEC general awards: course specification.* BSC, [1979]

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[1] This statement was prepared as a reflection of BEC policies and their implementation as at July 1983, so far as they relate to the broad issues surrounding the use of profiles. The Business and Technician Education Council, BTEC (which was formed by the merger of BEC and TEC on 1 October 1983) has not yet given any specific consideration to profiling.

*A new Course Specification for BTEC General Awards in Business Studies (formerly BEC General Awards) will come into effect in September 1984. This incorporates a number of revisions to the objectives of the core modules, including The World of Work.

Student's Name: Richard Bristow

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	ASSIGNMENT NUMBERS									NOTES
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
A BE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS										A steady, if unspectacular performance, with no consistent weakness in any area. Richard's best performances were in group-work.
A1	✓	✓			✓				✓	
B APPRECIATE THE DIFFERING ROLES AND OBJECTIVES OF ORGANISATIONS										
B1		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B2	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
C UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP OF ORGANISATIONS TO THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY										

Figure 2 Extract from an Example of a Student Profile Against an Assignment Programme

business-related assignments, as well as by end of year examinations. The publications 'Teaching/Learning Strategies and Assignments' were produced for General and National level courses in order to assist teaching staff in developing suitable programmes for learning and assessment. In these publications it was stressed that student performance should be related to clear objectives. It was pointed out that, if a profile of student achievement in assignment work was developed, it could assist with identifying and remedying areas of weakness and with the process by which a final grading was decided. Such a grade might well be different from one arrived at by the straightforward aggregation of marks. This was illustrated by an example of an individual student profile showing how performance in each assignment might be recorded against the objectives of the module concerned (see Figure 2).

Use of profiles in BEC courses

3. However, it would appear from the feedback received from moderators, regional officers and from the annual reviews of standards, that many teachers saw little or no advantage in the type of profile which was suggested, and there were complaints that such a system of recording performance was impossibly cumbersome and time-consuming. Nonetheless, it is now believed that the majority of centres have adopted some simpler form of profiling of performance against objectives, although in many cases it is not formalised and differs in style from lecturer to lecturer.

Findings of annual reviews of standards

4. For the last four years BEC has carried out an annual review of standards involving the inspection of a large sample of student assignments and examination work in a variety of study areas, collected from a number of schools

An assignment should rest on a scenario, a concrete description of a setting or situation or sequence of events. Ideally the detail will be contemporary as well as realistic, credible to the students who are to use it, and normally in an easily understood style and format.

The assignment should normally specify a role for the student and indicate whether he/she is to work individually or in a group. The role should be realistic in relation to his or her present or prospective level of work.

The use of the term 'assignment' is inappropriate for student tasks such as writing essays, filling in blank spaces, answering multiple-choice items, providing brief answers of factual knowledge, and exercises calling for a single piece of writing provided immediately under examination conditions.

Source: *Fourth annual review of standards.* BEC, December 1982.

Figure 3 Examples of Features of Good Assignments

and colleges. The review findings indicate that there is room for improvement in the ability of teams of teaching staff to identify clear criteria of achievement, to monitor student performance against such criteria, and to develop coherent learning programmes which help to provide this achievement. The reports to schools and colleges following each review have endeavoured to encourage good practice in this area, to stimulate constructive debate amongst staff on the issues involved, and thereby to ensure the growth of a more analytical approach (see Figure 3). This way forward has been seen as being, in the long term, more likely to achieve educational advances than any formal requirement on centres to employ a particular type of profile in connection with BEC courses.

Profiling and BEC general awards

5. In the past year, the Working Group responsible for co-ordinating the Review of BEC General Awards has given close attention to the question of introducing some form of profiling system as part of the revisions to these courses which will be introduced in September 1984. After careful consideration, the Working Group decided against any recommendations to introduce profiles in the immediate future. However, this was principally a reflection of the accepted need to ensure that BEC developments do not occur independently of any profiling arrangements determined for the Certificate in Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE), for Youth Training Scheme (YTS) programmes or as part of future BTEC policy. In fact, the Working Group urged Council to continue to give detailed consideration to the question of profiling in conjunction with these developments.

Views of BEC General Awards Review Working Group

6. In its discussions, the Working Group, whilst identifying a number of advantages and disadvantages of profiles, recognised that there were several attendant issues which would need to be resolved.

7. It was felt that profiles could encourage a more student centred, achievement-orientated, formative process of assessment, in line with BEC's policies. However, it was recognised that profiles are *records* of assessment rather than a means of assessment. Invalid methods of assessment will not produce valid profiles. Indeed, a profile may only serve to highlight the extent of the invalidity.

8. Even given the much wider acceptance than in 1979 of courses defined in terms of specific learning outcomes,

many teachers still experience difficulties in criterion-referencing their assessments of student performance. The deep-seated conventions of educational assessment in the UK seem to result, in practice, in a greater concern with reliability (consistency) than with validity and relevance. Detailed numerical marking also tends, in practice, to produce norm-referencing of students rather than to be related to the achievement of clearly identified criteria. Profiles will not be utilised with any effficiency unless some significant headway is made first in the above problem areas.

9. Profiles have the potential advantage of providing a fairer and more detailed summative record of a student's performance. The more information which is communicated in a record of assessment to students, employers, etc., the less likely are they to make unjustified assumptions about it. On the other hand, there may be some reluctance on the part of teachers to employ a system which highlights specific areas of failure (as well as success) which are often concealed by a single mark or grade.

10. A straightforward summative profile will be necessary if employers, professional bodies, universities, etc., are to find it of more use in their selection procedures than a grade or a mark. A profile which is ideal for the formative purposes of the teacher may be too complex to provide an effective summative record of performance as well.

11. There is evidence that many employers are more concerned that a qualification is based on a reliable assessment system than are interested in detailed knowledge of the criteria of performance which have been used. The introduction of profiles, therefore, may not result in any fairer deal for the students to whom they are applied.

12. It will be necessary for there to be considerable standardisation in the format of profiles adopted by different educational bodies to deal with the same areas of skill and knowledge if their use is to become accepted by employers. The introduction of profiles solely for students of a sub-BEC National ability range also presents dangers. The mere possession of a profile could create a prejudice in the minds of certain employers that the student concerned was not able enough to acquire a more traditional record of assessment.

Conclusions

13. BEC supports the idea that teachers should provide more useful information on performance to students and to employers. The adoption of profiles is a potentially significant step in this direction, with the following provisos:

(i) Changes in assessment methods (and in the methods of encouraging appropriate learning) are necessary before profiles can be used effectively by the majority of teachers;

(ii) there should be co-ordination with developments in profiling in conjunction with CPVE and with YTS;

(iii) unless and until the use of profiles is accepted by teachers associated with the qualification(s) concerned, initially they may be employed most effectively if introduced on a voluntary basis as a means of allowing those teachers interested in doing so to provide information to supplement a set of grades;

(iv) if profiles are adopted, their eventual use should not be confined to the average/lower ability band.

Development of Profiling in the Technician Studies Course

Bill Bolton

Introduction

1. In late 1981, largely in response to the MSC's New Training Initiative and the call for provision of full-time vocational education and training for young people under the age of 18, the Technician Studies course was devised by TEC. The course was designed to provide a broad basis for technician employment and related further education through a combination of work experience and relevant study. It was piloted during 1982-3 in some 60 centres, both as the further education component of MSC courses and as a full-time, one year pre-vocational course for students aged 16+ in schools and colleges. The course aimed to meet the education and training needs of young people with the ability to undertake the course successfully and the potential to become technicians.

2. The course comprised a short orientation period which concentrated on career, skills and ability diagnosis, followed by a broad vocational course of study, derived largely from standard level I TEC units. This course included a 'core' which was common to all technician functions, followed by one of a number of introductory vocational options. These options related to a wide range of industries and enabled the student to progress to a variety of educational programmes within the industrial sector(s) chosen.

3. The approach to assessment for the pilot course was for each core component and vocational option to be assessed by a combination of centrally supplied end of unit tests from TEC's developing assessment resource and a locally devised series of assignments, which, it was hoped, would reflect the task orientated and applied nature of the course.

Profiling in technician studies

4. One of the features introduced into the pilot Technician Studies course was a portfolio issued to all students. The portfolio was seen as an extension of the profiling in other TEC programmes. It provided evidence for a Record of Success issued on completion of the course. It also listed all the units and grades awarded, and provided information on: students' attainments in basic skills (Figure 1 on page 38), their attitudes (Figure 2 on page 39), samples of their work and details of training/work experience. Colleges were instructed to fill in profiles as often as required but, in practice, colleges tended to issue one profile for each student per term. Profiles, along with examples of work, were held to provide a cumulative record of students' competencies.

5. Profiling was introduced to the pilot scheme to fulfil two major functions.

(i) *Formative*, to act as a tool for the regular monitoring and review of student progress. Ongoing monitoring and review are, of course integral parts of the teaching and assessment process, but profiles are seen as a formal means of ensuring regular dialogue between student and tutor/co-ordinator on progress, supported by counselling and guidance as necessary.

(ii) *Summative*, to accumulate during the course a portfolio of evidence regarding the student's competencies. The portfolio of evidence, possibly including samples of the student's work and reports from work experience placements, could give a more detailed picture of student performance on the course than the Record of Success. Indeed the portfolio of evidence could be issued regardless of whether the student completed the full course successfully. Thus it could serve as a useful basis for interviews with prospective employers or for discussing progression with FE/training course providers.

6. Profiling was seen as complementing the assessment approach, with performance on in-course assignments providing the main basis for completing profile statements but also providing more useful details of strengths and weaknesses. The advantages of such a system were seen as enabling recognition to be given to student performance not only on the Technician Studies course, but also on: work experience, residential experience, community work and Young Enterprise. In addition, attention was paid to those aspects of the course used for personal development beyond the requirements of TEC, for example, those that recognise any progression as an achievement. Standardised profile statements were supplied to colleges to cover each unit in Technician Studies, basic skills and attitudes. Figures 1, 2 and 3 give examples of these statements. The Attitudes Profile has been withdrawn for the present (see paragraph 22) and is not discussed in detail here.

Figure

TECHNICIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL

Profile Statement for a Course in Technician Studies

BS

Basic Skills

Student:

College:

Date:

The following summarises some of the basic skills of the above student at an early stage in the course. The document is intended to provide a basis for consideration of the course most appropriate to the student. The profile is in the form of two opposite statements with the position of the student between those extremes being indicated in a five-point scale.

	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Communicates easily with others (a) Reads fluently with understanding. (b) Can express ideas clearly in writing.						1. Has difficulty in communicating clearly with others. (a) Reads with difficulty and finds difficulty in understanding what is read. (b) Finds difficulty in expressing ideas clearly in writing.
2. Uses mathematics without difficulty. (a) Carries out basic arithmetical operations with ease. (b) Has no problems with fractions and decimals.						2. Prefers to avoid situations involving mathematics. (a) Has great difficulty with basic arithmetic. (b) Has difficulty with mathematics involving fractions and decimals.
3. Develops manipulative skills quickly. (a) Able to use basic workshop tools/laboratory equipment. (b) Produces clear drawings/sketches.						3. Takes a lot of practice to develop manipulative skills. (a) Has difficulty in using workshop tools/laboratory equipment. (b) Has difficulty in producing clear drawings/sketches.
4. Methodical						4. Haphazard in approach to problems.
5. Self-reliant						5. Needs constant supervision.

The student has carried out assignments and visits relating to the following industrial sectors:
Engineering; Construction; Science; Hotel Catering and Institutional Management;. . . . .

. . . .

(Delete inapplicable sectors; include additional sectors as appropriate.)

General Comments:

Signed: Status:

TECHNICIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL

Figure 2.

Profile Statement for a Course in Technician Studies

Attitudes

Student:

College:

Date:

The following summarises some of the attitudes of the above student while studying the Technician Studies course. The profile is in the form of two opposite attitude statements with the position of the student between these extremes being indicated on a five-point scale.

	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Takes initiatives						1. Prefers to follow set instructions and the lead of others.
2. Works well as a member of a group.						2. Dislikes working with others.
3. Works hard.						3. Avoids work.
4. Takes a pride in his/her work.						4. Sloppy worker.
5. Accepts authority.						5. Resents authority.
6. Attentive at all times.						6. Inattentive.
7. Punctual.						7. Bad timekeeper.
8. Good attendance record (any notified illnesses being excepted).						8. Skips classes/work for no acceptable reasons.

General Comments:

Figure

TECHNICIAN EDUCATION COUNCIL

Profile Statement for a Course in Technician Studies

Unit: Mathematics I (U80/683) **Value:** 1.0

Student:

College:

Date:

Unit General Objectives for the student are that he/she:	Performance*			
	NA	3	2	1
A. Arithmetic operations				
1. Evaluates expressions involving integer indices and uses standard form.				
2. Evaluates expressions involving negative and fractional indices and relates indices and logarithms.				
3. Ensures that answers to numerical problems are reasonable.				
4. Understands and uses tables and charts.				
5. Performs basic arithmetic operations on a calculator.				
B. Algebra				
6. Uses basic notation and rules of algebra.				
7. Multiplies and factorises algebraic expressions involving brackets.				
8. Solves, algebraically, simple equations and linear simultaneous equations.				
9. Evaluates and transforms formulae.				
10. Understands direct and inverse proportionality.				
11. Determines the equation of straight line graphs.				
C. Geometry and Trigonometry				
12. Calculates areas and volumes of plane figures and common solids using given formulae.				
13. Understands the types and properties of triangles.				
14. Understands the geometric properties of a circle.				
15. Solves right angled triangles for angles and lengths of sides using sine, cosine and tangent functions.				
D. Statistics				
16. Collects, tabulates and summarises statistical data and interprets it descriptively.				

*An entry of X in NA means not yet assessed, 3 means the student has been assessed but needs more practice, 2 the student has shown basic competence and 1 the student has shown a high degree of competence.

General Comments:

Signed: **Status:**

Basic Skills Profile

7. The Basic Skills Profile seeks to summarise, in a checklist format, student attainments, for example, in literacy, application of numbers, manipulative skills and the areas of vocational sampling experienced by the student in the early stages of the course. It is designed for use mainly during the orientation period, as an aid to negotiation between student and tutor/co-ordinator as to whether the student should continue with the course and which vocational focus would be most appropriate.

8. The profile is in the form of two opposing statements with the performance of the student indicated on a five point scale graded between two extremes (see Figure 1). Thus, if a student's performance equates with the statement on the left, a cross should be placed in column 1, if with the statement on the right, a cross in column 5. Usually a student, who wishes to progress to the rest of the course with a reasonable chance of success, is expected to have entries in columns 1-3. Decisions on grading students for the Basic Skills Profile will be made on the basis of student performance in the tasks undertaken in the orientation period. As completion and grading of tasks have to be agreed by both tutor and student, they form a basis for the discussion and allow each party to present its case. In this way, the student is allowed a greater input into the decision making process which ultimately will affect his/her future.

Unit Profile

9. The Unit Profile statements are derived from the general objectives of each component/unit (see Figure 3). Performance on each general objective is indicated on a three point scale, with an additional column (NA) to indicate that the student has not yet been assessed in this area. The statements are designed for periodic issue, possibly at the end of an off-the-job block of study in a college, or at the end of each term, or when they are required for the updating of a student's portfolio, for example, for an interview.

10. Performance grades entered on the profile statements are based on the student's performance in assignments. Entries in columns 1 and 2 indicate that students have gained sufficient mastery of the objectives to be able to proceed to further study dependent on these objectives. Students with performance entries of 1 or 2 for all objectives should, therefore, be coping successfuly with the unit. Students with numerous entries in column 1 are performing above average and are likely to obtain grades of merit or distinction in the unit. Performance entries in column 3 point to the need for further tuition and practice.

Feedback on profiling in technician studies

11. At the end of the pilot Technician Studies course, a letter was sent to all co-ordinators involved in the scheme, inviting them to comment on the course in general and on profiling in particular. Of the 60 colleges running Technician Studies, replies were received from 19 colleges (31% response rate). Comments were invited under the following headings:

(i) the present format of the Technician Studies profiles and portfolios;

(ii) their reception by staff, students and potential employers, and their perceived functions/usefulness or otherwise;

(iii) the relative merits of a national system of profiling, such as the one being piloted for the Technician Studies Course, and of local profiling arrangements, such as a number of local education authorities (LEAs) are developing.

12. On the whole the response from college staff was favourable. However, there was some criticism directed mainly at the use of attitude profiling and the repetitive nature of the summative information. With regard to the repetition, many staff felt that they carried out already a great deal of assessment in other forms and that additional assessment could become burdensome. The following summarises the main points to emerge, with illustrative comments by the teaching staff.

Format/content

13. Staff in several colleges commented on the difference between, on the one hand, Unit Profiles based very closely on unit assessment and, on the other hand, Basic Skills and Attitudes Profiles, with their more generalised and possibly more subjective statements. The Attitudes Profiles were considered to be particularly subjective but the Basic Skills Profiles were also criticised by some for a tendency towards subjectivity. Comments included:

> 'We like the left to right sequence on the Unit Profiles,
>
> i.e. NA 3 2 1
> POOR GOOD
>
> but would question the Attitudes Profiles, which have a right to left sequence,
>
> i.e. 1 2 3 4 5
> GOOD BAD'

'There was a wide variation from lecturer to lecturer when the Basic Skills Profiles were completed after the orientation period'.

In particular, concern was expressed by respondents in almost half the colleges about the negative/positive polarity of the Attitudes Profile, illustrated by the following comments:

'The "accepts/rejects authority" entry was considered to be open to misinterpretation, e.g., does an entry in column 1 indicate unnatural subservience or reasonable acceptance of authority?'

'The Attitudes Profile conflicts with the positive philosophy of profiling.'

In several colleges it was considered that the Unit Profiles were unnecessarily detailed and that a summary would be more useful. Comments about the orientation of the profiles, i.e. some being left to right others being right to left, reflect the need for greater care in the design of profile statements so as to ensure continuity of format.

Reception by staff, students and employers

14. The reception of the profiles by staff was varied. Most reported that filling in the forms meant extra work.

'Staff generally feel that too much profiling is simply a repetition and does not benefit either staff or student. However, most would like to give it another year before making up their minds.'

Others felt that the profiles were acceptable and easy to complete. As profiles are based on unit tests which need to be recorded anyway, it is difficult to see where the 'extra work' lies. However, if there is unnecessary duplication of such records, this is another area which possibly could be revised in the future. Generally, staff viewed profiling as an effective method of summarising skills with a useful breakdown into general objectives which allowed students to appreciate their strengths and weaknesses.

15. Staff in some colleges expressed the view that they could see no function for profiling beyond duplicating the ongoing assessment and review which were an integral part of teaching.

'Staff were very reluctant to fill in profiles. They seem to think that the students are being over assessed with assignments, topic tests, end tests *and* profiles'.

'It is felt that profile sheets are not really necessary for a course in which established marking and certification procedures are available'.

16. The comments above illustrate misconceptions of staff with regard to the summative information contained in profiles. The function of profiles is to convey more information than just examination marks and grades, which obscure strengths and weaknesses and do not take into account related experiences. The formative aspects of profiling, that is the discussion between staff and students about progress and development of skills, cannot be considered without an accurate and concise record of student achievements. It would seem, therefore, that staff were failing to see the interconnection between these two aspects of profiling.

17. In general, staff considered that the profile system provided students with regular feedback on their performance, which enabled them to identify any weak areas. However, it was pointed out several times that, while students were pleased to receive written evidence of their ability, it was easy to foresee that only the 'good' profile would be kept, while the 'poor' profile would conveniently be mislaid. The following comments illustrate these points.

'Profiles can be helpful documents for students, as they show the areas where more practice is needed. Opposing this view is one that they deter weak students rather than encourage them, especially in the light of low job prospects'.

'The students with good results are keen to show their results to a potential employer but those with poor results are reluctant to show theirs'.

18. Staff in several colleges mentioned that it was too early to tell whether employers found the system useful. In those colleges where staff had received feedback from employers, it was considered that the portfolios were of little use during placement as the information could be obtained directly from the college. Staff from one college commented:

'Employers find a little value (from profiles) during placement – they can identify work already covered – but as they have access to the unit and the tutor, similar information is available elsewhere . . . However, they may find profiles far more valuable when interviewing/assessing candidates for permanent employment, as they give details of trainees' abilities in greater depth than any previous system'.

Staff in other colleges were more sceptical and felt that employers seemed to be more interested in conventional letters of reference, summaries of relevant experience, examination results etc. For example:

'Many employers are still not familiar with TEC qualifications, let alone profiles. It is generally considered that the suitability of a candidate for employment will be based on the examination results and interview/intuition rather than on profiles'.

Another comment was that:

'Prospective employers have indicated that they find the existing Unit Profiles too detailed'.

Again, it would seem that these comments indicated a failure by staff (and employers) to see beyond administrative demands to the underlying functions of profiling. The profile contains information about examination results/grades but it goes further than this and provides a broader picture of the students' competencies and related experiences.

National or local profiling?

19. When asked to compare the relative merits of national and local systems of profiling, the majority of respondents were in favour of a national standardised system. Where local profiling systems were in existence it was felt that duplication of both LEA and TEC profiles would entail too much paper work for staff, be too time-consuming, and would make it difficult for potential employers to abstract the relevant information. Thus:

'A national system of profiling could prove useful, provided it is simplified and rationalised, whereas a multitude of local arrangements could prove confusing and make it difficult to compare national standards'.

A few respondents did mention the positive aspects of local profiling systems, for example, that they have greater flexibility and staff involvement.

'The TEC Unit Profiles are very much concerned with achievement of Unit objectives whereas our local profiles takes the form of a 'formative' document to be used as a basis for individual guidance and negotiation. Because they are so different, we believe there is merit in running the two systems together'.

20. Comments from colleges illustrated the split between those who regarded the profile as a record of academic achievement and those who regarded it as a formative tool. The majority of colleges indicated that a standardised national profile would be deemed more creditworthy by employers, yet would have to be kept simple for ease of comprehension, thereby possibly negating its function

and value. This highlights the problem of matching the philosophy on which profiling is based with the realities of achieving this in terms of administration, costs, time, and benefits to teaching staff, employers and students.

21. The concern of respondents over subjectivity in the attitudes profile also brought to TEC's attention the need to take a step back and to re-evaluate its proposals in terms of the underlying philosophy of profiling and what it hopes to achieve.

Future Implementation of profiling

22. On the basis of the comments from teaching staff it has been decided that the use of attitude profiles should, for the present, be discontinued. It is considered that the assessment of an individual's attitude is too complex to be reduced to a simple scoring grid and that more consideration needs to be given to whether statements should or could be made.* Apart from minor alterations to individual profiles, based on recommendations from teaching staff, it was decided to use the combined formative/summative unit profiles with the same format for a further year. It was recognised, however, that more development work was necessary.

23. The criticisms from staff of the repetitive nature of the summative information which could be obtained by employers through other college records were recognised. It was appreciated, however, that the formative aspect of profiling was particularly useful in student guidance. The formative and summative aspects were considered inseparable. It was felt that accurate, summative information about an individual's knowledge, skills and experience was dependent on face to face formative discussion between teaching staff and student about progress and overall development.

24. Feedback from college staff has been of considerable value to TEC in the further development of profiling in Technician Studies. The obviously sensitive arrangements in some centres demonstrate a genuine and positive attempt to use profiling as a tool to benefit students, teaching staff and potential employers. However, staff concerns frequently illustrate a failure to see beyond administrative/paperwork demands to the underlying functions of profiling in the course. This has highlighted the need for TEC to remedy its apparently inadequate justification for introducing profiling into the course and also the need for continuing staff development in this area. Initial steps have been taken and efforts will continue to be made to ameliorate this situation. A paper has been circulated to staff involved in Technician Studies outlining the background and underlying philosophy of profiling with respect to the Technician Studies course. In addition, BTEC has expressed interest in its increased involvement in continuing staff development in the area of profiling.

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*See discussion on the merits and methods of assessing personal qualities by Geoff Stanton in Section 3.

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CGLI: The Profiling of Basic Abilities*

Sheila McGregor and Nick Stratton

Introduction

1. This paper is concerned primarily with the development and evaluation of the City and Guilds Basic Abilities Profile for use within pre-vocational schemes. City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) sees profiling as a logical and natural extension of its traditional assessment strategy in that it provides much needed information about the personal development of young people during a programme and can offer valuable details of achievement which complement examination results and personal references.

2. In 1979 various sources were drawn upon to provide a basis for developing a profiling system for reporting trainee performance on pre-vocational schemes.** As described in the earlier FEU publication***, the new profiling system was piloted in a variety of Youth Opportunities Programmes (YOPs) with fair success, although evaluation indicated that there was a need for further development work, particularly in relation to staff training and to the management and implementation of the scheme. Profiles were also incorporated into the City and Guilds of London Institute 365 Vocational Preparation (General) scheme which was based upon the pilot studies (conducted jointly by the Institute and FEU) of the *A basis for choice* (ABC) curriculum.†

3. In 1980 a two year evaluation study was launched in collaboration with the MSC and the Lancashire and Oxfordshire local education authorities. In order to ascertain the utility of the profiling system in both education and training sectors, field trials were conducted in both YOP and pilot Youth Training Schemes (YTS) and in colleges and schools where the profiling system was superimposed on a wide range of full time courses. Some results of this evaluation are given later.

4. Concurrently with this evaluation study, the new profiling system has been used operationally and this experience has yielded much useful information regarding the organisational aspects of profiling.

Basic abilities profiling

5. The original development work indicated that there was a range of fourteen basic abilities, organised within four categories, which should be included on a profiling form. Subsequent research has indicated that minor changes in abilities would be desirable and some of these are incorporated in the profiling form shown in Figure 1* on page 53. For each ability, five levels of attainment are described and shown in the form of a grid. The attainments are set within an occupational context by means of examples drawn from the student's work and experience. These are described alongside the grid as shown in Figure 1.

The profiling system

6. Figure 2 on page 54 shows the four components of the system and how they inter-relate. The first three components make up the *formative* system, the purpose of which is to support the student's learning by ensuring that their needs are identified and that the learning programme is satisfying those needs. These components are confidential to the student and to the tutor. The fourth component, the final *(summative)* profile report, serves the entirely different purpose of communicating the student's attainments to a third party, for example, an employer. It is, therefore, a public document.

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*Throughout this article, the term 'abilities' refers to achievement as recorded in the CGLI profile of performance.

***A basis for choice.* 1st Edition. FEU, 1979; Industrial Training Research Unit. *A-Z study.* IT RU, 1978; Pearce, B. et al., *Trainee centred reviewing* MSC, 1981; CGLI Schemes: 926. Instructor/Supervisor Award.

****Profiles.* FEU, 1982.

†*ABC in action.* FEU, 1981.

*Figure 1 shows the Profiling Grid categories used on most English YTS and all Northern Ireland Youth Training Programmes registered after August 1983. Because of the evolutionary nature of the profiling developments, the profiling abilities contained within the grid used by schemes may vary slightly.

7. *A Log Book* – maintained by the student, provides a record of what she/he has learnt and experienced and forms the main input to reviews (see Figure 3 page 55).

8. *Reviews* – enable student and tutor to discuss progress and to make plans for future work. They are also intended to be useful for identifying and resolving problems and for building good working relationships. The review, therefore, is at the heart of the formative profiling process. A jointly agreed record of each reviewing session is maintained within the log book (see Figure 4 page 57).

9. *A Progress Profile* – is completed jointly by the tutor and the student every six to ten weeks (see Figure 1). It records specific applications of abilities, the examples being drawn from the student's work and experience, thereby setting a *context* for the generic statement on the grid. The 'examples' stage is always completed first as it provides the basis on which to judge the level of ability which has been achieved. This level is recorded by shading-in the bar up to and including the appropriate level on the grid. It is essential that the two pages of the profiling document are always viewed in conjunction so that the grid is not taken in isolation as being the 'CGLI Profile'.

10. *The Final Profile* – issued when a student leaves the scheme — is comprised of four pages. The front page provides details of both student and scheme (see Figure 5 page 58)*; the inside pages summarise the best examples of ability at the highest levels attained on the grid (see Figure 1); and the back page describes how the profile system works and provides additional information such as other qualifications achieved.

Design features

11. The 12 design features listed below establish the philosophy and rationale underlying the system. They are grouped under three headings: 'Purpose of profile', 'Profiling process' and 'Necessary support'.

Purpose of profile

The basic abilities to be reported

12. The 14 abilities included on the Institute's profiling form are needed by all people preparing for adult working life as they are applicable to a wide range of activities connected with work, leisure and personal affairs. The development and reporting of these abilities is expected to enhance employability and personal effectiveness. The range of abilities has been limited by CGLI to those on which a valid and reliable report could be entered on the summative profile form, but it is not intended to reduce the scope of topics discussed in the formative reviewing sessions.

Pre-vocational bias

13. As the focus of profiling is on the development of the basic abilities mentioned above, rather than on the study of an academic subject or the acquisition of specific vocational skills, it is well adapted to pre-vocational curricula, whether in education or training. Such curricula aims to develop these basic abilities and provide the opportunity for them to be acquired and practised in a variety of occupational contexts, thereby promoting skill ownership: as such, profiling is seen as an integral part of the curriculum.

Wide ability range

14. The reporting system should encompass as wide a range of student ability as possible, reflecting the range of student abilities on pre-vocational courses.

Descriptive reporting

15. Examination results, although often used for selection purposes, are considered by many employers to provide insufficient information for their needs. The summative profile report should provide descriptive reports showing just what a young person can do and describing the occupational tasks in which their abilities were demonstrated.

Separate skills and attitudes

16. The summative profile report should show what a

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*Figure 5 shows the Final Profile which is being issued during the academic year 1983/84. Computerised issue of Final Profiles (scheduled for July 1984) will necessitate minor amendments to be made to format and also to the content to reflect changes to grid categories referred to in the footnote to the Progress Profile shown at Figure 1 page 53.

person can do, and should not comment on attitudes because such characteristics are dependent upon the context in which they were observed. Stating that a person has been able to demonstrate a *skill* suggests that he/she can repeat the performance under favourable circumstances, whereas statements of *attitudes* are not a reliable guide to future behaviour and so they lack predictive value.

Levels of achievement

17. Unless summative profile reports can be compared easily, they are unlikely to gain employer recognition and so play their full part in selection procedures. A design aim for a summative profile, therefore, is to provide a common format which combines the description of the individual's achievement with indicators of the levels achieved.

Profiling process

Progress tracking

18. If levels of attainment are to appear on the summative profile report it is necessary to establish their source. One way to do this is to use the same profile format for keeping track of progress as is used for the summative profile. This has the advantage of keeping objectives associated with the final report in mind during the course. In addition, Progess profiles have desirable characteristics in their own right. In particular, the step-size from one level to the next should allow progress to be registered in a reasonable period, as this assists student motivation greatly.

Evidence gathering

19. A system is needed to gather relevant information prior to reviewing and to completing the progress profiles. One of the most flexible ways of achieving this is through the use of a log book. The CGLI produces a standard form which many tutors have found useful. However, staff are free to devise their own log books or to develop alternative methods of gathering information appropriate to their own course structures. It is an essential feature of the whole of the formative process (log book, review and progress profiles) that it should be supportive to student learning. In order to achieve this, the process must be flexible and applied sensitively.

Open recording

20. The Institute intends the profile to be applicable in as wide a variety of contexts as possible and does not wish to restrict the range of evidence which could be used. For the basic abilities profiles as used in pre-vocational schemes, therefore, it is considered impractical to provide a pre-defined checklist of particular attainments in context. Instead, specific examples of ability are generated from the student's experience on courses and work experience.

Negotiations/reviews

21. The student is party to all formal entries in the reporting system. This enables the benefits of trainee centred reviewing (which include improvements in students' attitude towards the staff, the course and themselves) to follow from their involvement in evaluation of their work.* To facilitate this negotiation between student and tutor, regular reviews should be held on a one-to-one basis.

Necessary support

Monitoring

22. As it is not practicable to double check all entries on profiles, CGLI is not in a position to guarantee individual profiles. However, visiting assessors are used to monitor the quality of samples of the profiles, and final profiles can be guaranteed on the basis of approving each centre as competent to compile them. The visiting assessors are also in a position to advise centres and to provide feedback to the Institute.

Staff development

23. It is recognised that profiling requires staff to exercise new skills and that appropriate staff support must be made available (see also paragraph 35). This is currently provided by the Institute in the form of induction workshops and a staff handbook. Some of these new skills are associated with reviewing (to listen and to negotiate); others have to do with profiling task analysis (setting down

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*Industrial Training Research Unit, 1978 op. cit.

examples of achievement and relating them to a profile grid); whilst others have to do with the ability to manage the profiling process and the team of tutors. It is also recognised that these staff developments need go far beyond those which could be provided by the Institute and that additional resources need to be made available by the host institution.

Evaluation

24. The evaluation studies of the profiling system, which took place over two years, were based upon schools, colleges and MSC programmes within Oxfordshire and Lancashire. The studies centred on four areas:

organisation of reviewing and profiling;

value of the profiling system to participants;

validity and reliability of the system;

staff development needs.

The principal findings for each of these areas are presented below. Evidence to support these findings is to be found in the report for project 3.*

Organisation

25. As is usual with action research, the participants in the pilot studies had little time for planning. Consequently, tutors found problems with time where the profiling system was superimposed on full time courses, as they inevitably had extra duties to perform. Institutions were often unable to find the resources to provide classroom or workshop cover while a member of staff was engaged in the one-to-one reviews. Although these factors may be mitigated to some extent by staggering the student group so that reviews are carried out with only a few students each week, there is no substitute for a well planned and managed system. Our evidence points to the need for

institutional commitment to profiling;

the establishment of a management team for each group of students involved in profiling;

the integration of profiling into the curriculum and learning programme.

26. Adequate time must be provided within the timetable for profiling. The preferred frequency of reviews was found to be weekly or fortnightly, and a typical review took 20 minutes. Where student/staff ratios were high it proved necessary to reduce the frequency of reviews. At six to ten week intervals the review was also a profiling occasion. It is desirable to complete six progress profiles during a year though three would be an acceptable minimum depending on individual circumstances. Each profiling session took between a quarter and one hour. The lower figure applied if the profiles were previously drafted. The higher figure applied when there was little preparation and authors were inexperienced.

27. Pooling information drawn from the various staff having contact with a student and passing it on to the individual undertaking the review could cause difficulties. This was especially true where precisely-stated information needed to complete the progress profiles was concerned. Staff meetings could be hard to organise and time-consuming. Several alternatives were adopted successfully in appropriate circumstances (depending on factors such as staff/student ratio, the number of staff having contact with a student, and the student's competence). For example, students could be responsible for ensuring regular completion of their profile or particular members of staff could be responsible for completing individual parts of the draft profile. There is no correct solution but a variety of methods will work if they are well planned and well understood by students and tutors.

Value to participants

28. As part of the evaluation, participating students and staff were invited to comment on each component of the profiling system. It was found that logbooks were well received by staff, who considered that they formed useful inputs to reviews and useful exercises in literacy. About half the students, however, were less favourably disposed towards logbooks, either because they did not like putting pen to paper, or because they found that entries became

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**Final report for CGLI profiling project 3.* CGLI, 1983.

repetitious (if their activities did not vary much from day to day). It was concluded that logbooks should be integrated more closely with the other components of the system and that they should be made more flexible in both content and frequency of entries.

29. Reviews were seen as worthwhile by both staff and students. They were used to keep track of students' progress and interest, to promote good working relationships, to channel constructive criticism of the course or scheme, and to enhance students' confidence and motivation.

30. Progress profiles were appreciated more by youngsters on MSC schemes than on FE courses, presumably because in the latter case the profiles were superimposed on self-contained, established courses, rather than being perceived as integral to them. Even so, figures from the project report show that the profiles found favour with a majority of youngsters in each case (73% of respondents from MSC schemes; 52% from education based courses). Staff and students agreed on the functions of the progress profiles which included:

keeping track of progress;

providing incentives and a 'map' of objectives;

use as a counselling aid;

use as a basis for compiling a reference for employers;

revealing strengths and weaknesses of syllabus and teaching method.

31. Final profiles, based on the Progress Profiles they had already seen, were wanted by around 70% of students (on schemes and courses). The students expected to find them useful to show potential employers, to help gain entry to a course, and as a record of attainment.

32. So far we have anecdotal evidence that employers have found the profile useful at interviews. There is a follow-up study in hand to determine the utility of final profile reports, though clearly any external value they have would be enhanced by national recognition, and this may take several years to develop fully. Meanwhile, surveys about the likely usage of these profiles have been conducted amongst representative samples of employers, careers officers, job centres and college staff. Substantial majorities of each group expected to find the profiles useful for guidance and selection purposes.

Validity and reliability

33. One aspect of validity concerns the correspondence between profiling objectives and course or scheme objectives. Within the research project it was expected that the two might not coincide in all cases as the scheme objectives were not always explicit and profiling was additional rather than integral to some of the courses in the pilot study. An alternative approach to validity is to examine the relevance of profiling to the students in the schemes and the compatibility, in terms of the learning process, between profiling and the curriculum. The research results referred to above indicate that both tutors and students felt the profile to be relevant. The compatibility of profiling depends on the opportunities provided by the course or scheme for the students to display evidence of participation in activities that are relevant to the profile grid. In general, these opportunities were present and most of the profile can be considered broadly compatible with a wide range of pre-vocational schemes and courses. The compatibility with academic and subject based curricula is more tenuous.

34. There is some evidence to support the claim that the later progress profiles, and particularly the final profiles, have adequate reliability in terms of accuracy. The final profile is produced usually by several members of staff, together with the student concerned. It rests on at least three progress profiles, and it contains a breakdown of attainment into 14 categories of basic abilities. Thus, provided that the participants understand the system and observe prescribed practice, a final profile, considered as a whole, has the potential to achieve a reliability high enough to gain acceptance by the users. Uniform interpretation of the profile within and between centres can be attained partly by staff development and support and partly through monitoring by visiting assessors.

Staff development needs

35. The results of the evaluation study suggest that the profiling system demands certain skills that staff may need

to acquire, in particular listening and negotiating skills for reviews and skills associated with completing profiles. Provision for staff development has taken several forms. *Induction meetings* have been used to convey the aims of profiling and how it can be organised and related to scheme or course content. They have included workshops on reviewing and profiling good practice. A *staff handbook* has concentrated on how to implement the system and how to interpret and complete profiles. It was found that *visiting assessors* could offer advice and help to promote a uniform standard of profiling. Sample profiles have been *exchanged* between centres to good effect. These last two provisions have been particularly useful for alleviating anxiety amongst staff about how well they have managed the system. In conclusion, two points should be noted. Individual staff should not be left in isolation to run the system; each centre should establish profiling teams who will contribute to individual student profiles. Secondly, the skills of profiling are best learnt 'on-the-job' but it is imperative that individual tutors receive support from others within the team and from tutors from other institutions also involved in profiling. A well structured staff support system is, therefore, essential.

Further experience

36. *CGLI 365 – Vocational Preparation (General)* – This full time course utilises the earliest version of the Institute's profiling system. In 1982/83 it ran in colleges and schools with around 5,000 students taking part and some 7,500 students are currently enrolled during the 1983/84 academic session. The 365 course is modular, providing fixed profiling occasions at half-termly intervals. Although some centres use logbooks, these are not mandatory. Also there are no intermediate reviews. The profiles are completed in collaboration with the students. The chief virtues of the system, apart from compiling a reference, are the encouragement to students to review their abilities and the channelling of feedback to teachers about the course. Two problems have been noted. First, there is a separate experiential checklist for part of the course, which means that the profile does not relate to the whole course. Second, it has proved difficult for staff to pool information about students prior to profiling. In many cases the best solution is for individual staff to complete draft profiles and for the information to be transferred to the final summative document by the course tutor.

37. *Northern Ireland Youth Training Programme (YTP)* The YTP programme (commencing a year earlier than YTS) adopted the Institute's profiling system. Around 7,000 youngsters took part in 1982-83 and a similar number are participating in 1983/84. For a fuller description of this scheme see Section 6.

Youth Training Scheme (YTS)

38. Several training agencies/boards conducted pilot YTS schemes with the basic abilities profiling system; these schemes had the advantage that competent members of the agencies conducted the profiling, reducing the need for staff development among employers in the industry. In addition, a wide variety of other pilot YTS schemes also adopted this profiling system and it is now being used extensively in Scotland and England in schemes in large and small companies, ITECs*, community service and training workshops, and in college based schemes. The system is attractive to these users because, besides matching the demands of YTS, it is centrally validated and so has the potential for national recognition.

Implications for the future

39. Research and operational experience to date has generated sufficient confidence in the profiling system for CGLI to continue with the provision and with its further development.

Pre-vocational developments

YTS

40. One aim of the profiling scheme is to satisfy the YTS requirement for progress-monitoring, and to complement the MSC's certification for YTS in a way that avoids duplication. To this end it may prove necessary to modify the profile to ensure compatibility with the YTS core, as the latter becomes more fully defined.

17+ (CPVE)

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*MSC-funded Information Technology Education Centres.

41. Detailed arrangements for recording student attainment have not been finalised. However, one of the initial proposals for 17+ was that 'the new certificate should therefore be awarded to all those who complete courses and record assessments of performance across the whole range of work which has been covered. In this way, employers will have a specific indication of candidates' attributes and their particular strengths.'[*] Profiling would seem to be particularly appropriate for this purpose.

Schools

42. The current profiling system is to be evaluated in schools in the context of CGLI Foundation Courses and of the MSC's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), with a view to establishing a unified profiling system for 14-18 year olds.

Vocational developments

43. The profile is essentially 'pre-vocational' in that vocational skills are sampled in order to provide the context for the 'generic grid'. In other words, it does not aim to capture vocationally-specific skills systematically. However, centres are encouraged to analyse the content of their schemes and to interpret the generic grid by means of relevant examples. Clearly this approach, if necessary, could be developed to the extent of compiling checklists of vocationally-specific skills which can be operated alongside the profiling system and be issued as a supplement to it. In the long run these checklists might conform to an industry standard and be nationally validated. Where appropriate (for qualification purposes) these checklists could also form the basis of skills tests. Such developments would not make the pre-vocational profile redundant; in fact it would probably operate more smoothly as (a) it can be more easily operated to a uniform standard, and (b) it is relieved of any vocationally-specific role. The provision of core plus optional abilities to replace the standard 14 basic abilities, is also under consideration. By reducing the 14 abilities to for example, ten, the remaining four optional ones might be slanted towards specific training families.

Staff development in support of profiling: CGLI 924 Youth Trainers Award

44. For staff in post, profiling workshops and continuing support will be provided as before. The effectiveness of staff guidance will be reviewed so as to optimise these provisions. Modules in trainee centred learning and assessment and reviewing are incorporated in the CGLI 924 Youth Trainers Award, which has replaced the Instructor/Supervisor Award (926) as a basic qualification for youth trainers in YTS.

45. This award takes the form of an achievement checklist which specifies the objectives for each of five modules. It also contains a list of suggested enabling objectives and an evidence column (HOW ACHIEVED) to complement them. This list can be amended to reflect individual circumstances. The extract overleaf shows the three components of the achievement checklist for one of these objectives.

46. The HOW ACHIEVED column is compiled both from assignments and from on-site supervision. The 924 achievement checklist parallels some of the principles of the basic abilities profile in that it is compiled jointly by tutor and student and that individual evidence from the student's experience and coursework is set against specified objectives. It is not designed however to provide an indication of progress or of level. The achievement checklist acts as a check that all the 924 objectives have been covered in a candidate's programme of work, as well as providing the mechanism by which achievement of the objectives is recorded.

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[*] *17+ a new qualification*, HMSO, 1982.

ACHIEVEMENT CHECKLIST – YTS AN INTEGRATED SCHEME **NAME:**________________

OBJECTIVE	ENABLING OBJECTIVE	HOW ACHIEVED	
		METHOD	COMMENT (to be filled in, then endorsed by the youth trainer *and* tutor)
6. Describe what is meant by integrated work experience, occupationally based training and off-the-job training/education.	6.1 Can describe the integrated nature of the three design elements of planned work experience/occupationally based training/off-the-job 6.2 Can recognise the value of the scheme's recording/reviewing system as a means of achieving integration 6.3 6.4		

Conclusion

47. The flexible structure of the profiling system, which enables it to be used with a wide variety of schemes and learning objectives, has undoubtedly been the key to its appeal. But it has come at a particularly crucial time – a time when there are so many demands and so many changes in our education and training system and associated curriculum. Our research and experience show that, given adequate staff development and management support, profile reporting in basic abilities can:

(i) give cohesion to and strengthen the curriculum

(ii) reinforce learning, particularly where there may be no pre-determined goals; and – most importantly –

(iii) provide national recognition familiar to employers throughout the United Kingdom.

The CGLI basic abilities profile is still young in terms of its introduction, and its further development will need to be monitored carefully. But it has demonstrated already that it has an important role to play in a comprehensive assessment of achievement.

Figure 1

City & Guilds of London Institute

Progress Profile

ABILITIES		EXAMPLES OF ABILITIES	PROGRESS IN ABILITIES				
COMMUNICATION	TALKING AND LISTENING	Listens to patients sympathetically and can describe their conditions to staff.	Can make sensible replies when spoken to	Can hold conversations and can take messages	Can follow and give simple descriptions and explanations	Can communicate effectively with a range of people in a variety of situations	Can present a logical and effective argument. Can analyse others' arguments
	READING	Can read technical books on nursing (for her project work).	Can read words and short phrases	Can read straightforward messages	Can follow straightforward written instructions and explanations	Can understand a variety of forms of written materials	Can select and judge written materials to support an argument
	WRITING	Writes out her logbook and project notes accurately and clearly.	Can write words and short phrases	Can write straightforward messages	Can write straightforward instructions and explanations	Can write reports describing work done	Can write a critical analysis, using a variety of sources
	USING SIGNS AND DIAGRAMS	Understands, with a little guidance, charts setting out emergency procedures.	Can recognise everyday signs and symbols	Can make use of simple drawings, maps, timetables	Can make use of basic graphs, charts, codes, technical drawings, with help	Can interpret and use basic graphs, charts, technical drawings unaided	Can construct graphs and extract information to support conclusions
	COMPUTER APPRECIATION	N/O	Can recognise everyday uses of computers N/O	Can use keyboard to gain access to data	Can enter data into the system using existing programs	Can identify potential applications for computers	Can construct error free programs
PRACTICAL & NUMERICAL	SAFETY	Suggested moving an electric cable, so that it could not be tripped over.	Can explain the need for safety rules	Can remember safety instructions	Can spot safety hazards	Can apply safe working practices independently	Can maintain, and suggest improvements to, safety measures
	USING EQUIPMENT	Uses a mixer and knives for kitchen work. (supervised)	Can use equipment safely to perform simple tasks under guidance	Can use equipment safely to perform a sequence of tasks after demonstration	Can select and use suitable equipment and materials for the job, without help	Can set up and use equipment to produce work to standard	Can identify and remedy common faults in equipment
	NUMERACY	Scaled up a cake recipe by doubling the quantities	Can count objects	Can solve problems by adding and subtracting	Can solve problems by multiplying and dividing	Can calculate ratios, percentages and proportions	Can use algebraic formulae
SOCIAL	WORKING IN A GROUP	Always keeps other members of the nursing team informed about patients.	Can cooperate with others when asked	Can work with other members of the group to achieve common aims	Can understand own position and results of own actions within a group	Can be an active and decisive member of a group	Can adapt a variety of roles in a group
	ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY	Uses own initiative when cleaning out patients rooms.	Can follow instructions for simple tasks and carry them out under guidance	Can follow instructions for simple tasks and carry them out independently	Can follow a series of instructions and carry them out independently	Can perform a variety of tasks effectively given minimal guidance	Can assume responsibility for delegated tasks and take initiative
	WORKING WITH CLIENTS	Can recognise if patients are uncomfortable and turn them in bed.	Can help someone to carry out clients' requests	Can carry out clients' requests under supervision	Can carry out clients' requests without supervision	Can anticipate and fulfil clients' needs from existing resources	Can suggest realistic improvements to services for clients
DECISION-MAKING	PLANNING	Can demonstrate how to turn a patient in bed.	Can identify the sequence of steps in everyday tasks, with prompting	Can describe the sequence of steps in a routine task, after demonstration	Can choose from given alternatives the best way of tackling a task	Can modify/extend given plans/routines to meet changed circumstances	Can create new plans/routines from scratch
	OBTAINING INFORMATION	Used the college Library to find information for her project.	Can ask for needed information	Can find needed information, with guidance	Can use standard sources of information	Can extract and assemble information from several given sources	Can show initiative in seeking and gathering information from a wide variety of sources
	ASSESSING OWN RESULTS	Can recognise whether or not her work is satisfactory both when nursing and doing kitchen work.	Can receive advice about own performance	Can seek advice about own performance	Can assess own results, with guidance	Can assess own results, for familiar tasks, without help	Can assess own performance and identify possible improvements

N/O = No opportunity to assess

Main Activities:

1. Helping to look after geriatric patients.
2. Assisting in the nursing home kitchen.

Signed (Trainee/Student) Gillian Anderson

Signed (Supervisor/Tutor) J Riley

Name of Centre and Course Ambleside Nursing Home / Pre-Nursing

Period covered by this profile (dates) — start: 10-9-83 end: 12-11 83

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Mark III

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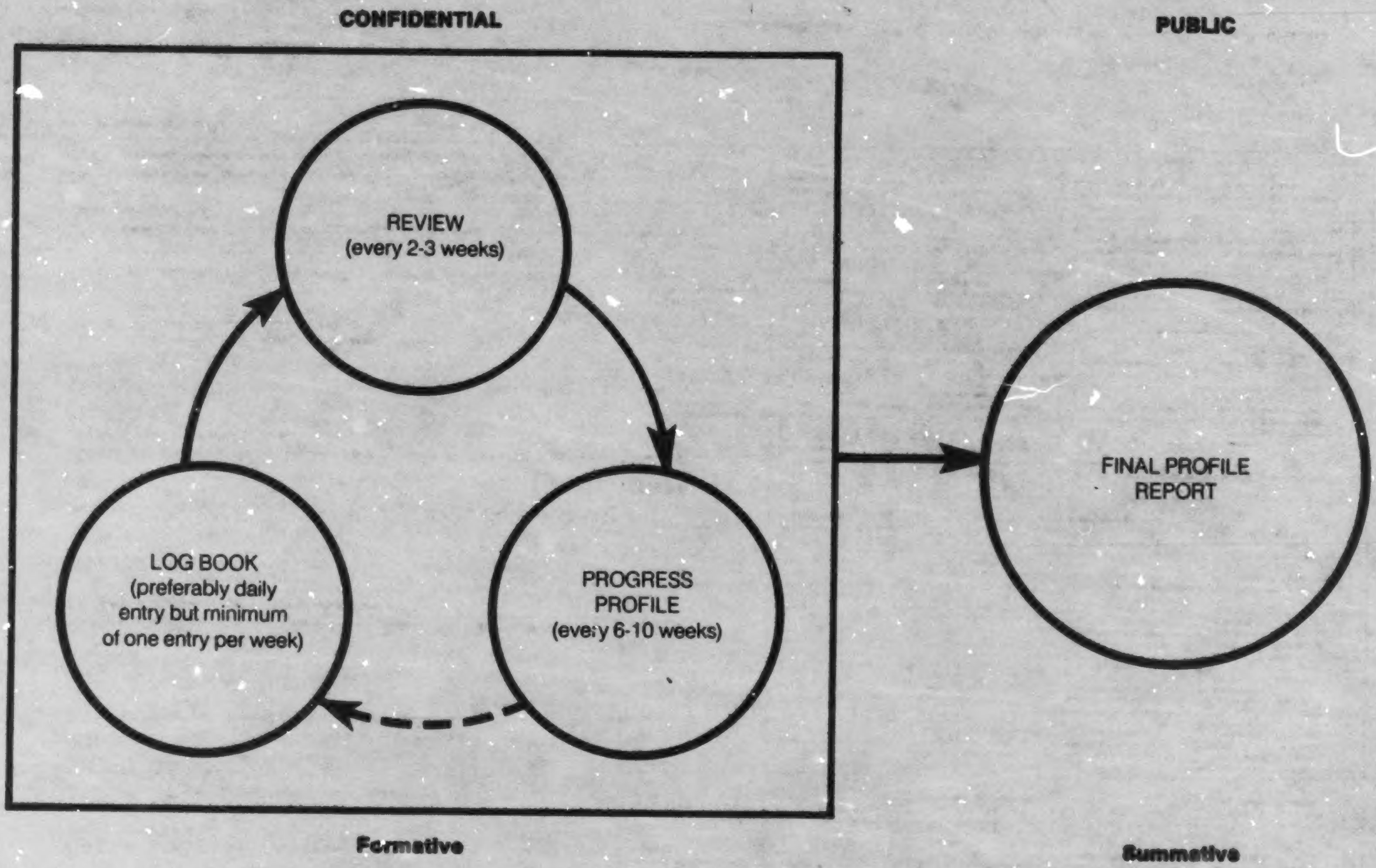
CONFIDENTIAL
PUBLIC
REVIEW
(every 2-3 weeks)
LOG BOOK
(preferably daily
entry but minimum
of one entry per week)
PROGRESS
PROFILE
(every 6-10 weeks)
FINAL PROFILE
REPORT
Formative
Summative

Figure 2 The CGLI Profiling System

WEEKLY RECORD OF TRAINING

WEEK COMMENCING ....

WEEK NO. 4

1. What work did you do and where?

Monday Bathed had a meeting with Staff and discussed with
Mr Lesley my project Tuesday Bathed fixed box for
Christmas hamper.
Wednesday went to College
Thursday Shaved John G and Bob F in morning, took
some residents out for a walk around the building. John F
cam home from hospital
Friday Took Jessie to dentist. Have to make Sure John F
gets enough to drink.

2. What did you do that was new?

The Staff meeting was new, Shaving the men was new,
taking Jessie to dentist and having to watch that
John takes enough liquid because of his kydneys.

3. What Off the Job Learning/Further Education did you undertake?

Learnt about Health and Safety Act and about
Giro accounts.
Practised some first aid.

Figure 3 continued

4. Was there anything you especially enjoyed during the week and why?

Taking some of the residents out for a walk was great because I had two residents with me and one complained of the cold and the other tried to tell her that she was talking nonsense, and it was good to see who would give in first. None did. I just took them in.

5. Was there anything you did *not* enjoy and, if not, why not?

Going to the dentist as we were just in about two minutes after waiting quarter of an hour and I did'nt like the dentists attitude to the resident involved.

6. Supervisors comments.

This week Gillian has progressed well.
Used her initiative with residents and certainly enjoyed herself. Has also been helping with Xmas preparations.
This has been quite a varied week for Gillian but she has coped very well.

Trainee's Signature Gillian Anderson Date 14-10-83

Supervisor's Signature J Reilley Date 14-10-83

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Figure 4

FOUR WEEKLY REVIEW OF PROGRESS

1. What are the main tasks or work areas covered in the last four weeks?

Care Work - bathing

Kitchen and domestic

Laundry

2. What has the trainee done particularly well?

All aspects of caring. Has a pleasant reassuring nature.

Has worked well with clients on hospital visits.

3. After discussion, we have agreed progress has been made in:

Integrating with the staff. Has developed in self confidence.

but attention needs to be paid to:

Projecting herself. Becoming a little more self assured.

Contributing at staff meetings.

4. The next month will be spent:

Working on project "Confused Elderly."

More involvement with baking etc. in Kitchen.

Trainee's Signature Gillian Anderson Date 14-10-83

Supervisor/Tutor Signature J [illegible] Date 14-10-83

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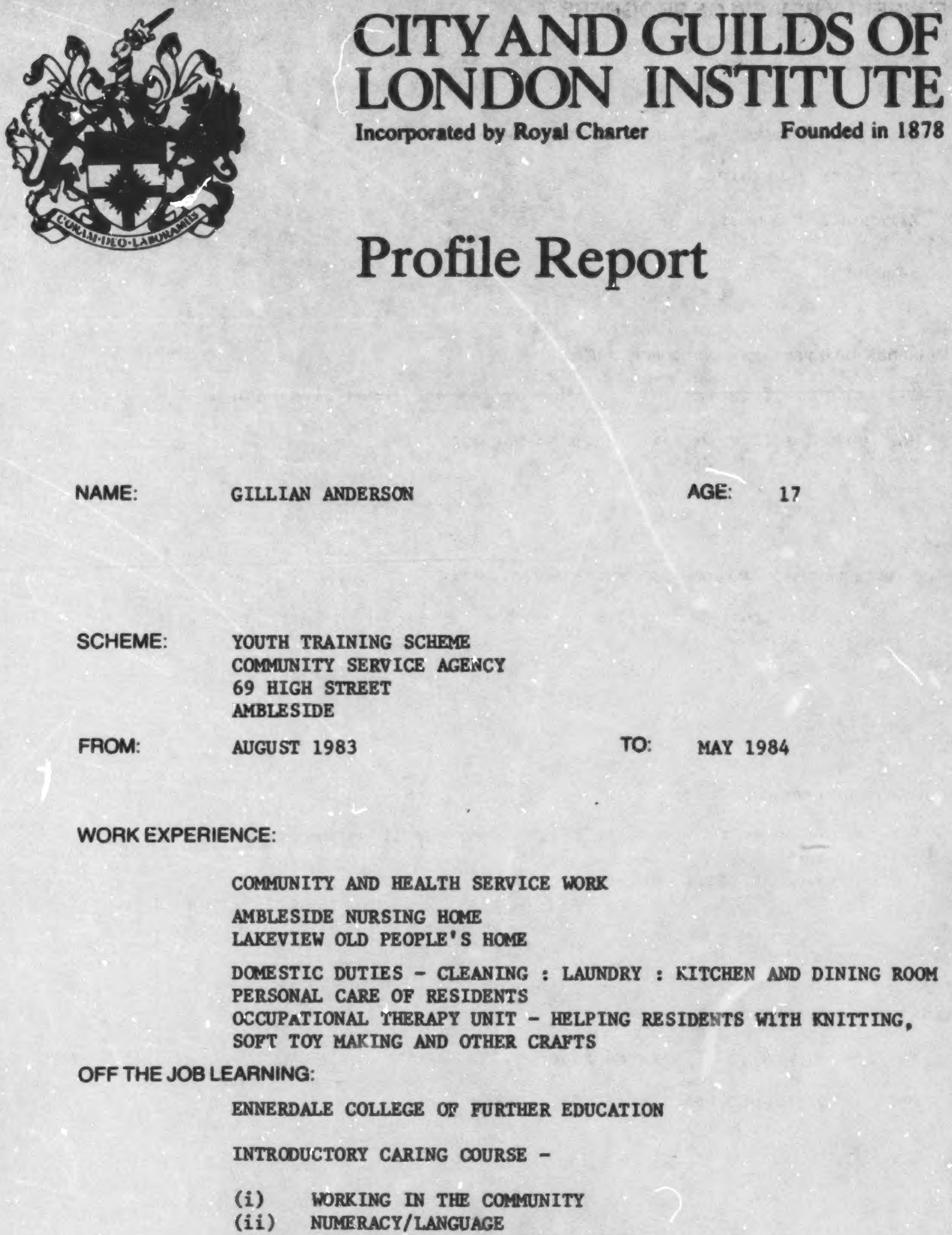
Figure 5



CITY AND GUILDS OF LONDON INSTITUTE

Incorporated by Royal Charter Founded in 1878

Profile Report

NAME: GILLIAN ANDERSON **AGE:** 17

SCHEME: YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME
COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCY
69 HIGH STREET
AMBLESIDE

FROM: AUGUST 1983 **TO:** MAY 1984

WORK EXPERIENCE:

COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICE WORK

AMBLESIDE NURSING HOME
LAKEVIEW OLD PEOPLE'S HOME

DOMESTIC DUTIES - CLEANING : LAUNDRY : KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM
PERSONAL CARE OF RESIDENTS
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY UNIT - HELPING RESIDENTS WITH KNITTING, SOFT TOY MAKING AND OTHER CRAFTS

OFF THE JOB LEARNING:

ENNERDALE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTORY CARING COURSE -

(i) WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY
(ii) NUMERACY/LANGUAGE
(iii) NUTRITION AND HEALTH EDUCATION
(iv) COMMUNITY SERVICES

This is an end-of-scheme profile, prepared on the basis of regular consultations between scheme staff and the trainee. Profiles are completed in conformity with CGLI requirements, and this process (but not individual attainment levels) is monitored by CGLI.

SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS OF ABILITIES

COMMUNICATION

Listened sympathetically to patients worries and discussed their problems with them.

Wrote letters for short sighted patients.

Maintained laundry stock records and checked written orders.

Followed written instructions/patterns for knitting and soft toy making.

Prepared an illustrated booklet on 'Caring for the Elderly' after researching material from a variety of sources.

SOCIAL ABILITIES

Worked well with other trainees and staff at Nursing Home - discussed patients progress.

Bathed, fed, dressed and shaved elderly patients without supervision.

Allocated and supervised work in occupational therapy unit.

Quickly got to know clients at each placement - reacted sensitively to the needs of confused elderly patients.

PRACTICAL & NUMERICAL ABILITIES

Used kitchen, laundry and cleaning equipment; also variety of craft tools.

Used clinical thermometer; took blood pressure.

Handled wheelchairs correctly with regard to safety and comfort of occupant.

Cooked meals without supervision, weighing and measuring ingredients accurately.

Estimated and costed materials for craft projects.

DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES

Planned recreational programmes to suit individual patients.

Helped organise patients outing - planning bus routes and researching required information on facilities.

Coped calmly with patients having epileptic fits.

Figure 5 continued

ATTAINMENTS IN BASIC ABILITIES

(Highest level from Progress tracking grid – see overleaf).

Bar indicates highest level attained

COMMUNICATION

TALKING AND LISTENING — Can communicate effectively with a range of people in a variety of situations

****

READING AND WRITING — Can use instruction manuals and can write reports describing work done

****

USING SIGNS AND DIAGRAMS — Can, after guidance, make use of basic graphs, charts, tables, drawings, etc.

****

SOCIAL ABILITIES

WORKING IN A GROUP — Can be an active and decisive member of a group

****

WORKING WITH THOSE IN AUTHORITY — Can assume responsibility for delegated tasks and take initiatives

****

WORKING WITH CLIENTS — Can anticipate and respond to client's needs

****

PRACTICAL & NUMERICAL ABILITIES

USING EQUIPMENT — Can select and use suitable equipment and materials for the job, without help

****

CONTROL OF MOVEMENT — Can use tools to do fine and/or complex work

****

MEASURING — Can measure out specified quantities of material by length, weight, etc.

****

CALCULATING — Can use x and ÷ to solve whole number problems

****

DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES

PLANNING — Can modify/extend given plans/routines to meet changed circumstances

****

SEEKING INFORMATION — Can show initiative in seeking and gathering information from a wide variety of sources

****

COPING — Can cope with unexpected or unusual situations

****

ASSESSING RESULTS — Can assess own performance and identify possible improvements

****

HOW PROFILES ARE COMPILED:

During the scheme the trainee has recorded his/her work and experience in a Log Book. From this record, specific examples of abilities in the four main areas (and the fourteen sub-categories) were identified and recorded at regular intervals against the **PROGRESS TRACKING GRID** shown below.

Simple tasks under supervision → Complex tasks without supervision

						(High Level)	*
COMMUNICATION	TALKING AND LISTENING	Can make suitable responses when spoken to	Can hold conversations with workmates. Can use telephone to take messages	Can follow and give simple descriptions and explanations	Can communicate effectively with a range of people in a variety of situations	Can present a logical and effective argument. Can analyse other's arguments	
	READING AND WRITING	Can read short sentences	Can read and write messages	Can follow and give straightforward written instructions and explanations	Can use instruction manuals and can write reports describing work done	Can select and criticise written data and use it to produce own written work	
	USING SIGNS AND DIAGRAMS	Can recognise everyday signs and symbols	Can explain signs and symbols	Can, after guidance, make use of basic graphs, charts, tables, drawings, etc	Can interpret and use basic graphs, charts, tables and drawings unaided	Can construct graphs etc. and extract information to support arguments	
SOCIAL ABILITIES	WORKING IN A GROUP	Can cooperate with others when led	Can work with other members of group to achieve common aims	Can understand own position and results of own actions within a group	Can be an active and decisive member of a group	Can lead a group	
	WORKING WITH THOSE IN AUTHORITY	Can follow instructions for simple tasks and carry them out under guidance	Can follow instructions for a simple task and carry it out independently	Can follow a series of instructions and carry them out independently	Can carry out a series of tasks effectively, given minimal guidance	Can assume responsibility for delegated tasks and take initiative	
	WORKING WITH CLIENTS	Can help someone to carry out a client's request	Can carry out client's requests under supervision	Can carry out client's requests without supervision	Can recognise client's needs	Can anticipate and respond to client's needs	
PRACTICAL & NUMERICAL ABILITIES	USING EQUIPMENT	Can use equipment safely to perform simple tasks under guidance	Can use equipment safely to perform several-step tasks after demonstration	Can select and use suitable equipment and materials for the job, without help	Can set up and maintain equipment	Can identify and remedy common faults in equipment	
	CONTROL OF MOVEMENT	Can lift, carry and set down objects	Can use everyday tools	Can use tools to produce work to given limits	Can use tools to do fine and/or complex work	Can perform tasks requiring a high degree of control	
	MEASURING	Can sort objects into sizes	Can read simple scales and dials	Can measure out specified quantities of material by length, weight etc	Can read precision instruments	Can set up and use precision instruments to make accurate measurements	
	CALCULATING	Can count	Can add and subtract whole numbers	Can use × and ÷ to solve whole number problems	Can add and subtract decimals and simple fractions	Can multiply and divide decimals and simple fractions	
DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES	PLANNING	Can describe the sequence of steps in everyday tasks, with prompting	After demonstration, can identify the sequence of steps in a routine task	Can choose from given alternatives the best way of tackling a task	Can modify/extend given plans/routines to meet changed circumstances	Can create new plans/routines from scratch	
	SEEKING INFORMATION	Can ask questions	Can find needed information when guided	Can use standard sources of information	Can assemble information from several sources	Can show initiative in seeking and gathering information from a wide variety of sources	
	COPING	Can cope with everyday activities, with help	Can cope with everyday problems. Seeks help if needed	Can cope with changes in familiar routines	Can cope with unexpected or unusual situations	Can offer sensitive and effective help to the group	
	ASSESSING RESULTS	Can seek advice about own performance	Can assess own results with guidance	Can assess own results for familiar tasks, without help	Can assess own performance and identify possible improvements	Can assess the group's performance, and help to improve it	

Enter * in end column if high level is exceeded

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

(NOT covered by CGLI Profile Scheme)

Is well motivated and willing to learn and is a conscientious and careful worker. Handled cash for making small purchases for patients.

CSE - English (2); Biology (3); Modern Studies (4)

CGLI - Numeracy Level I

CGLI - Caring Skills Certificate

Voluntary work - fundraising for charitable bodies
Committee member of Youth Club.

RSA Profiling Developments

Martin Cross

Introduction

1. The Royal Society of Arts (RSA) Examinations Board was the first national examining body to make profile certification available when it introduced its Vocational Preparation (Clerical) course in 1976. Since then, on the basis of learning from experience of schemes in operation, the Board has developed its philosophy and approaches to profile certification.

Current provision

2. The Board's current provision of curriculum led profile certification – including both national schemes and those available only on a pilot basis – can be classified as follows:

(i) *Practical Profiles*
Certification of student/trainee achievement in particular skill areas regardless of the context in which those skills have been learned and practised: a 'template' which can be applied to existing curricula, e.g., the Practical Communication Profile or the Practical Numeracy Profile.

(ii) *Integrated Schemes*
Certification of students/trainees who have followed an integrated course or programme of training within a particular occupational area, e.g., the Vocational Preparation (Clerical) and Vocational Preparation (Distribution) schemes.

(iii) *Specific Profiles*
Certification of those who have followed a course which has enabled them to demonstrate their achievements in defined [core] areas, e.g., the Certificate of Continuing Education, and English as a Second Language.

(iv) *Cumulative Profiles*
Certification of achievement related to the performance of a particular role but demonstrated in a variety of situations at a variety of times, e.g., Certification for Vocational Preparation Tutors.

Discussion of the use and format of profiles of each of these types follows.

PRACTICAL PROFILES

3. The original idea for the approach adopted by these schemes is attributable to the ILEA's Further and Higher Education Curriculum Development Project. Much of the work has been carried out there. Schemes of this kind currently available are:

Communication Profile	(nationally available)
Numeracy Profile	(nationally available)
Process Skills Profile	(ILEA/RSA pilot)
Practical Skills Profile	(RSA pilot)
General Profile	(RSA trial/pilot)

These schemes are concerned with competencies rather than knowledge, with the ability to perform tasks rather than with factual recall. The assessment mechanism, while operable only in a particular context, or contexts, is itself context-free and can thus be applied to any curriculum area. This can be clearly shown by reference to the Communication Profile.

4. If a student is following a catering course with the intention of seeking employment in catering, for instance, that individual has to follow written instructions for a recipe, respond quickly to oral requests from a supervisor or waiter and so on. Equally, the trainee in the electrical contracting industry has to be able to scan the Institution of Electrical Engineers Regulations, to explain to a colleague what is required, to interpret a diagram etc. A student attending an 'A' level politics or physics class has to show that she can evaluate evidence, state her own point of view in a discussion, interpret and use pictorial and graphic information. In all these cases, under the existing conventional examination arrangements, the individual receives no credit for the skills and competencies owned and demonstrated and yet it is these very skills and competencies that are required for progression to higher education.

5. The student who answers correctly a multiple-choice item demonstrating knowledge of the cooking method required for a particular dish has not shown that he can prepare and cook it. Similarly, the student who produces a highly-marked essay answer to the question 'What are the arguments for and against electoral reform in this country?' is probably only reproducing, at the factual recall level, class or homework exercises from the

previous year and is not demonstrating, in any meaningful way, abilities to select relevant information, evaluate arguments, empathise with conflicting points of view, and so on. In each case the examination is not testing what the employer or the higher education institution wants tested, nor is it testing in the student's interest. In each case, however, the curriculum *content* or *topics* could remain relatively unchanged while revised assessment procedures – such as the Communication Profile – could be applied in order to accredit and certificate those skills and abilities that are of real value.

6. An example of how this can work in practice is described below by Bellamy*:

'If success is to be measured in terms of certificates awarded, or in terms of motivation, or in terms of experience and confidence gained, then in my school we can boast of a dramatic leap forward on all three measures. The system which made these exciting changes possible was the Practical Communication Profile certificated by the RSA.

'The students who received Profiles in my school ranged from a few who had never before received any external certificate of achievement to some who had several "O" level passes to their credit. They were following a variety of different courses. All enjoyed their RSA work and all welcomed their Profiles.

'In working with the students I found that I used only a fraction of the material in my "Workshop" (a set of old lockers by the way, not some purpose built palace), and most of my ideas were never needed. The selection, execution and assessment of assignments often became an exploration, a revelation, as one never knew what might spark off a whole sequence of events. For instance, a piece of creative writing about a flood led to an investigation of the risk of London flooding, with critiques of the GLC's published leaflets and warnings, and visits to the Barrier site (involving a lot of talk, map-reading, travel-planning and dealing with the public); a chat about the possibility of moving out of London to find work led ultimately to a visit to a small commuter town with a group of students from a local college – weeks of useful activity, including discussion, letter-writing, telephoning, planning, map-reading, report-writing and a high degree of social responsibility. *None* of this was from a textbook: *all* of it was *real*.'

7. The recommended method for using Practical Profile schemes involves both tutors and learners. First of all, the scheme- or course-team will have agreed the aims and objectives of the training programme or course. Next, the team will expand those aims and objectives into a course checklist which details the range of skills and abilities which learners will be given the opportunity to acquire and demonstrate. The team will then determine the contexts (and content) within which those opportunities will be offered. Clearly, at this point the team can decide whether the assessment of skills is to take place across the whole course or programme or is to be operated within one element only.

8. The various learning experiences that are to be made available to the learners can also be checklisted, i.e., described in terms of the items from the overall course checklist towards which the experience contributes (see Figure A). During the course or programme, tutors and learners can therefore discuss and agree which particular learning experiences are appropriate, which provide the contexts within which the learner wishes to operate, which will assist the learner to develop particularly desired skills and abilities, and so on. Centre-devised learner records contribute to this discussion and negotiation process. An example of such a record is shown as Figure B overleaf.

---

*Bellamy, J., *RSA News*, No. 1, Spring 1983.

FHE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Figure A

RSA PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION PROFILE
RSA PRACTICAL NUMERACY PROFILE

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT MATERIALS

These materials were used as assessment assignments for students on courses using the RSA Practical Numeracy and/or the RSA Practical Communication Profile Certificates as accreditation.

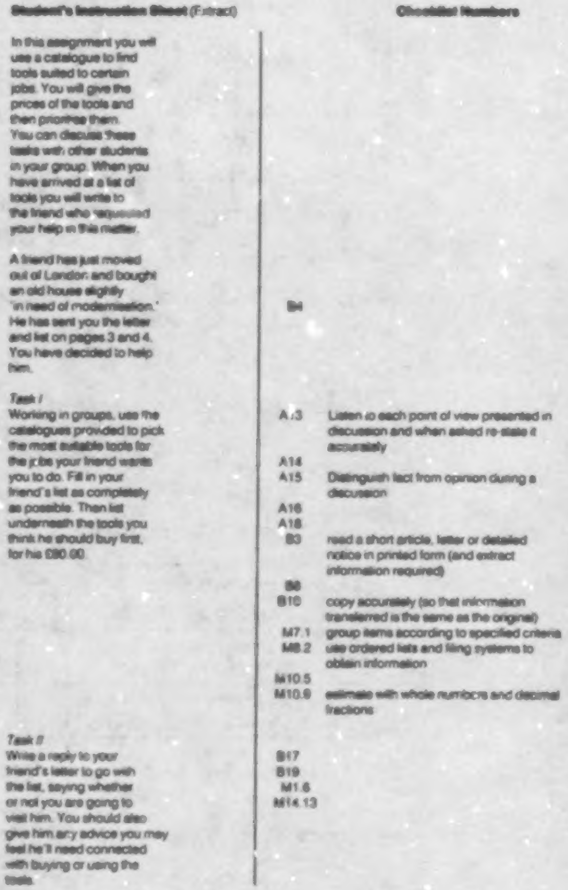
The materials have been checklisted according to the objectives used by the RSA Practical Communication Profile and the RSA Practical Numeracy Profile. Each assignment shows the objectives which the student *may* be said to have reached if completion of the assignment is satisfactory.

Examples of checklist sentences are given for some of the objectives, to illustrate the skills covered.

Assessment Title World Expert Helps Out

COMMUNICATION A Dealing with People	A13	Listen to each point of view presented in discussion and when asked re-state it accurately
	A14	
	A15	Distinguish fact from opinion during a discussion
	A16	
	A17	
	A18	
COMMUNICATION B Dealing with Information	B3	Read a short article, letter or detailed notice in printed form (and extract information required)
	B4	
	B8	
	B10	Copy accurately (so that information transferred is the same as the original)
	B17	
	B19	
NUMERACY M	M1.6	
	M7.1	Group items according to specified criteria
	M8.2	Use ordered lists and filing systems to obtain information
	M10.5	
	M10.9	Estimate with whole numbers and decimal fractions
	M14.13	

Source: FHE Curriculum Development Project (ILEA)



Student's Instruction Sheet (Extract)

In this assignment you will use a catalogue to find tools suited to certain jobs. You will give the prices of the tools and then prioritise them. You can discuss these tasks with other students in your group. When you have arrived at a list of tools you will write to the friend who requested your help in this matter.

A friend has just moved out of London and bought an old house slightly 'in need of modernisation.' He has sent you the letter and list on pages 3 and 4. You have decided to help him.

Task I
Working in groups, use the catalogues provided to pick the most suitable tools for the jobs your friend wants you to do. Fill in your friend's list as completely as possible. Then list underneath the tools you think he should buy first, for his £80.00.

Task II
Write a reply to your friend's letter to go with the list, saying whether or not you are going to visit him. You should also give him any advice you may feel he'll need connected with buying or using the tools.

Checklist Numbers

B4

A13 Listen to each point of view presented in discussion and when asked re-state it accurately
A14
A15 Distinguish fact from opinion during a discussion
A16
A18
B3 read a short article, letter or detailed notice in printed form (and extract information required)
B8
B10 copy accurately (so that information transferred is the same as the original)
M7.1 group items according to specified criteria
M8.2 use ordered lists and filing systems to obtain information
M10.5
M10.9 estimate with whole numbers and decimal fractions

B17
B19
M1.6
M14.13

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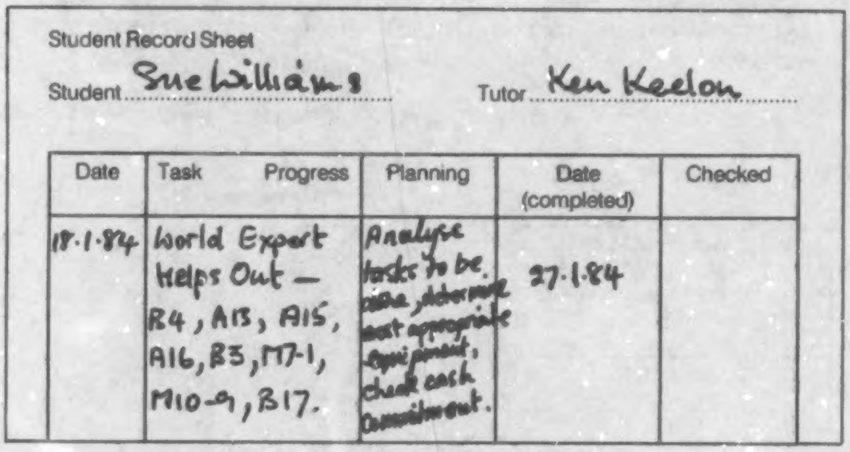
9. The Board issues Skills Record Sheets on which are listed all the skills which may be assessed (see Figure C). These sheets can contribute to the learner/tutor dialogue, as well as provide a central and secure record of continuing assessment, a focus for integrating a programme or course, and a tool for curriculum analysis. Individual learners' Skills Record Sheets also provide a basis for the RSA Assessor's discussions with teams concerning the types of learning experiences offered, and the performances required from learners for entries on the Record Sheets.

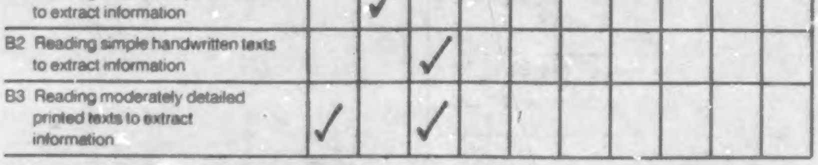


Student Record Sheet

Student Sue Williams Tutor Ken Keelon

Date	Task Progress	Planning	Date (completed)	Checked
18.1.84	World Expert Helps Out — B4, A13, A15, A16, B3, M7-1, M10-9, B17.	Analyse tasks to be done, determine most appropriate equipment, check each consignment.	27.1.84	

Figure B Example of a Student Record Sheet



ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS EXAMINATIONS BOARD

PRACTICAL COMMUNICATION PROFILE

Skills Record Sheet

Place ✓ in the box where skills have been demonstrated according to the skills check-listed for the assignment, otherwise leave empty.

Student Sue Williams Tutor Ken Keelon

SKILLS TASK AND DATE DEALING WITH INFORMATION	Dealing 12-4-82 22-4-82	Work 3-5-82	Using the High Street [illegible]							
B1 Reading simple and printed texts to extract information		✓								
B2 Reading simple handwritten texts to extract information			✓							
B3 Reading moderately detailed printed texts to extract information	✓		✓							

Figure C Example of the Skills Record Sheet

70

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10. It is desirable to provide a summary of the achievements of students in a manageable form for both the school/college and the certificating body, without requiring more than one sheet of paper. Summative assessment is, therefore, provided by transferring the agreed entries from individual Skills Record Sheets to the Continuous Assessment Record Sheet which will also include a course/programme description outlining the contexts within which the skills have been demonstrated (see Figure D).

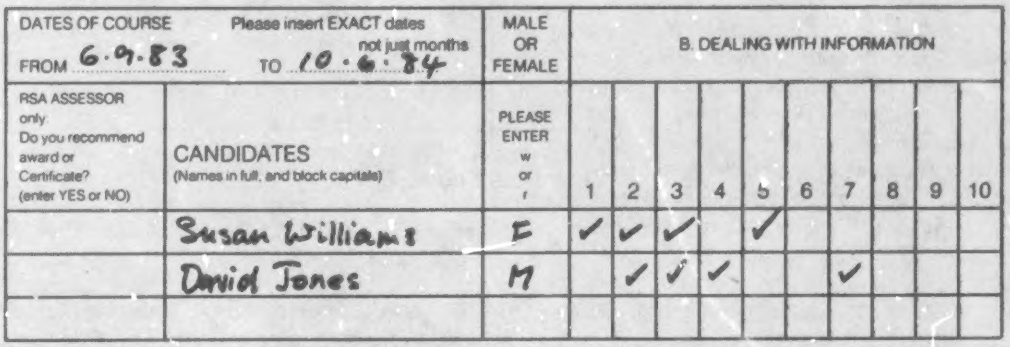
11. From the information provided on the Continuous Assessment Record Sheet, the RSA issues individual profile certificates. These can be issued at any time convenient to centres, as there are no requirements about length or mode of courses/programmes, thus enabling centres to provide certificates to learners whenever they choose to leave. Furthermore, only positive statements are made, without grades, and there is no prescribed minimum number of skills to be achieved before the issue of a certificate.

12. The profiles are in use in schools, colleges, and other institutions e.g., Project Fullemploy, School Support Units, a Chamber of Trade and the Junction Project. The profiles are applied as an assessment mechanism to a wide variety of courses including Study Skills for Slow Learners, Fabric Craft, Typewriting, Catering, Welfare Studies and YTS Vocational Preparation courses. One school uses the Profiles to assess Communication Skills across a range of CEE, CSE, 'O' level, BEC and CGLI courses; another gives accreditation to competencies acquired in courses covering communication, social skills, community based tasks and vocational preparation links with electronic and mechanical engineering. A sixth form centre uses them for their health workers' courses and there are many and varied examples of their application to general studies.

13. The certificates contain a description of the course to which the profile has been applied, stating that the student, within a specific context, has demonstrated the abilities listed. For example, one course based on the formation and operation of a small business has a general description:

'The students formed and operated a small business which was liquidated at the end of their course. They raised their own share capital which formed the operating capital of the Company. They then chose a product which they manufactured and sold. They elected their own officers and operated the company on a co-operative basis with the help of lecturers and advisers from industry. The aims of the project included the development of personal confidence, resourcefulness, problem solving ability and practical skills. The project has improved their communication skills with their peer group, their lecturers, their advisers and customers. Because the company operated in a realistic manner the students became aware of the diverse problems of industry by facing them, albeit in miniature, within their own business.'

Practical Communication Profile



DATES OF COURSE Please insert EXACT dates not just months FROM 6.9.83 TO 10.6.84		MALE OR FEMALE	B. DEALING WITH INFORMATION									
RSA ASSESSOR only Do you recommend award or Certificate? (enter YES or NO)	CANDIDATES (Names in full, and block capitals)	PLEASE ENTER M or F	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Susan Williams	F	✓	✓	✓		✓					
	David Jones	M		✓	✓	✓			✓			

Figure D Example of the Continuous Assessment Record Sheet

INTEGRATED SCHEMES

14. Following the success of the Vocational Preparation (Clerical) scheme, the RSA introduced the Vocational Preparation (Distribution) scheme, which follows the same format, and indeed has objectives in common in areas such as Communication, Numeracy and Career and Personal Development. These two schemes are among those accredited for the new Certificate in Pre-Vocational Education, and are also being used widely for Youth Training Schemes (YTS). Recently, too, a number of schools — some operating within the Government's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative — have introduced the schemes into the last compulsory years of secondary education.

15. The principal features of these vocational preparation schemes are their integrated nature and the use of assignments or task-based projects as the vehicle for assessment. For the educational institution offering the schemes these features have important consequences for working arrangements, particularly in regard to co-operation between staff and between staff and students. Before the start of the session, a framework needs to be established, within which the detailed learning experiences and assessment processes can be negotiated with each individual student. Without this framework, an integrated approach involving all members of the course team is unlikely to be achieved. As the course progresses, amendments and modifications will almost certainly be needed in the light of the students' progress. These can be discussed and agreed in consultation with the whole course team at the regular weekly team meetings.

16. Another important aspect of the integrated nature of these schemes is the relationship between the on- and off-the-job training elements, or between the work experience and the educational elements. Both elements can and must contribute to achievement of the aims and objectives of the scheme. Learning and the assessment of that learning can, therefore, take place either in real or in simulated work situations. For example, to achieve the objective expressed by the profile sentence 'is able to follow the correct procedures for the acceptance or rejection of credit cards', the learner can either complete satisfactorily an assignment or assignments involving rôle play or can perform these tasks in the work-place itself. An approach of this sort to learning and assessment provides a genuine bridge between education and industry, and foreshadows the thinking being applied in the best YTS schemes (see Figure E).

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS EXAMINATIONS BOARD

Vocational Preparation (Distribution) Course Specimen Assignments

Task 1
A customer is buying a wedding outfit. She has noticed your Access signs in the window and wishes to pay by credit card. The cost of the outfit is £59.00.

Task 2
A regular customer is buying several items and is pleased to see you now accept credit cards. He produces his own card in order to pay for:

(a) 3 sweaters @ £7.99
(b) 2 shirts @ £6.50
(c) 1 pair of trousers @ £22.50

Task 3
Some of the clothes you sell are designer labels and fairly expensive. One lady wishes to purchase an elaborate evening dress costing £175. She doesn't have enough cash and asks to pay by credit card.

Summary of Assessment

Student is able to write sales documents correctly and legibly ☐

Student is familiar with procedure for customer payment by credit card ☐

Student is able to add items and money on paper ☐

Student is able to use the telephone effectively ☐

Figure E

SPECIFIC PROFILES (e.g., the Certificate for Continuing Education)

17. This certificate was introduced to meet the needs of adults who want to increase their confidence in order to return to work or proceed to further education. Those who do not need, or who have completed, basic literacy or

numeracy schemes may still lack the particular skills or self-confidence that courses of further education demand. The Certificate for Continuing Education accredits those skills, while the content, duration and mode of attendance, within which the college or institute makes available the opportunities to acquire skills, are a matter for negotiation between learner and teacher. Thus courses for the Certificate have ranged from part-time evening courses extending over more than a year to short full-time courses such as the Wider Opportunities for Women programmes.

18. Like the Board's other Profiles, this scheme involves a process which includes the use of a checklist of objectives, local assessment, and moderation of that local assessment by the Board's Assessor. The checklist of objectives contains relevant profile questions to be asked of the student in the five areas listed below and which, if appropriate, appear as statements on the Certificate. On leaving the course the candidate receives an RSA Certificate containing those profile sentences for which he or she has qualified. The complete list of *sentences* that could appear is as follows:

The candidate has demonstrated ability to

Spelling, Writing and Presentation of Work

- produce simple written work that is legible, relatively free of spelling errors, and clearly punctuated
- present simple written work, clearly structured and in an appropriate format
- write as appropriate, simple formal and informal letters, demonstrating a knowledge of the appropriate conventions
- produce information on a subject in note form
- write simple essays and reports, presenting and supporting a point of view
- understand and complete forms in everyday use

Numeracy

- interpret simple diagrams and maps
- produce simple explanatory diagrams and maps
- understand and use timetables
- interpret simple graphs and tables
- carry out everyday financial transactions

Talking with Confidence

- give a short talk or report
- prepare for, and take a constructive part in, various types of interview
- teach simple tasks to others, and learn from the practical examples and explanations of others

Study Skills

- use a dictionary both to check spelling and to discover the meaning of words
- use encyclopaedias and other reference books
- discover the general meaning of a piece of writing by skimming, and the exact meaning by careful reading
- record in note form essential details of both oral and written material
- use the range of facilities commonly offered by a public library
- identify appropriate opportunities for further study and training
- plan his/her own study programme

Project

- carry out a project by independent study and produce a report which is informative and clearly presented, making use of some of the skills acquired during the course.

19. During the pilot year of the scheme (1981-82) a number of interesting issues were noted by learners, tutors and assessors. Some of these issues led to Notes for Guidance addressed to course tutors, which give an indication of the approach used with this Certificate.

Extract from Notes for Guidance to tutors of Certificate for Continuing Education course.

Student involvement. One of the aims of the course is to give students self-confidence and independence, so you should involve them in decision-making from a very early stage. Here are some suggestions:

(i) *Every student should have a copy of the checklist of objectives for classwork.* The checklist contains questions to be asked of the student. Examples relating to Numeracy are given below:

Numeracy (at least 4 of the 5 items must be achieved)

1. Can you understand simple diagrams, and could you draw one if you needed to in order to explain something to someone?

2. Can you understand simple maps, and could you draw a rough map of a place you know well?

3. Can you understand a set of figures if they are presented to you in the form of a table?

4. Do you understand simple graphs?

5. Can you perform the simple arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, simple percentages and measuring) involved in everyday financial transactions, such as planning a weekly budget, calculating VAT, etc.?

(ii) *Plan the work with the student.* The most important thing we can teach them is how to plan their own work. They cannot learn this if you do all the planning. Show them how to plan tasks which will involve more than one skill in the checklist.

(iii) *Plan early on in the course.* The checklist is not meant to be taken in any special order, and item IV 6 ('Have you thought about carrying on with your studies . . . ?') should be considered before you start thinking about a project. One student recently wanted to go on to a GCE Social History course, and was able to spend the Continuing Education year ensuring that she was genuinely interested in it and was capable of following a more formal course. She was also able to find the most convenient place where the course was taught, and even met the teacher. Most students will be much less sure at the beginning of what they want to do next, but that makes it more important to spend time, early on, finding out what the options are and sampling a range of possible subjects.

20. Like other RSA profile schemes, in addition to detailed notes of guidance, regular meetings of Assessors are held to assist with problems of standardisation and with preparing additional guidance for Course Tutors. While the Certificate has value in itself, it should also provide a means of progression. By expressing candidates' achievements in competency terms, such progression in further education is facilitated. Specific recognition has been negotiated with certain 'Open College Federation' schemes.

CUMULATIVE PROFILES (The Certificate for Vocational Preparation Tutors)

21. A number of recent developments have emphasised the need for vocational preparation staff development to be based on personal needs resulting from the curriculum and not on an externally imposed curriculum. However, many tutors undertaking curriculum-led staff development are receiving no form of recognition, no statement of their learning achievements or experiences, for the staff development programmes they may currently be undertaking. This lack of recognition both undervalues the contribution such tutors make, and also makes mobility of tutors between institutions and regions less practicable.

22. The Board decided, therefore, to make available, on a pilot basis, broad learning objectives and guidelines (as recommended by ACSET*) for locally-devised schemes of staff development for staff engaged on vocational preparation programmes, whether in educational institutions, or employer's premises, or elsewhere. The Board provides a checklist indicating skills which tutors of vocational preparation should be encouraged to possess, and profile certification recognising those abilities which tutors are acknowledged to possess following a staff development programme. No grades are awarded. The profile contains seventeen statements about

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*Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers.

competencies, but no minimum number is required before issue of the certificate. The seventeen profile sentences are below, together with the related checklist items for three of those sentences, as examples (see Figure F).

RSA CERTIFICATE FOR VOCATIONAL PREPARATION TUTORS – CHECKLIST

Profile Sentences		**Checklist Items**
The candidate has demonstrated ability to:		
Write aims illustrating the purpose of a particular training programme;	A	
Write realistic objectives for particular learner(s);	B	
Devise schemes of work setting aims and objectives in context;	C	
Design appropriate learning experiences, materials and strategies;	D	
Describe an appropriate core for a vocational preparation programme;	E	
Apply core skills to vocational contexts, and vocational contexts to core skills;	F	1. Integrate different subject and vocational studies. 2. Liaise and negotiate with others to integrate on- and off-the-job elements in a training programme. 3. Relate the core to local circumstances. 4. Illustrate the learning of core skills in a variety of vocational contexts. 5. Demonstrate the transferability of generic skills between contexts.
Negotiate learning experiences with learners:	G	
Provide learners with guidance;	H	
Use appropriate teaching/learning methods	I	
Checklist learning experiences and materials against aims and objectives	J	
Apply the concept of generic skills in context;	K	
Apply the concept of skills transfer and ownership of skills;	L	
Contribute effectively to the programme team's planning;	M	1. Disseminate curriculum and method information to other staff. 2. Work with other staff in adapting and devising appropriate methods. 3. Fulfil tasks within the constraints of time and resources. 4. Liaise and negotiate with other members of the institution, employers, resource providing agencies, colleges.
Integrate own teaching with that of others;	N	
Record learner performance and experience;	O	1. Checklist learning experiences and materials against aims and objectives. 2. Act on feed-back from learners and learners' performance. 3. Establish methods of record-keeping appropriate to particular learning experiences. 4. Co-ordinate evidence from a variety of sources. 5. Operate within the requirements of standard-setting agencies.
Provide formative and summative assessment to learners;	P	
Evaluate the effectiveness of a particular learning programme.	Q	

Figure F

23. No requirements as to duration of staff development programmes, or modes of attendance, are laid down by the Board. Thus individuals may achieve profile certification in a variety of ways, for example:

(i) individual A may take part in a two-day in-service programme arranged for the Basic Clerical Procedures course team, of which he is a member, in his own college; he also takes part in a weekend residential course organised by the Regional Advisory Council on the topic 'The Needs of 16-19 year olds' and attends a weekly half-day session organised by the local education authority adviser writing numeracy materials for use with YTS trainees;

(ii) individual B takes part in a programme organised by her local MSC accredited centre where the programme includes the design of YTS; the integration of the elements of YTS; assessment, review and recording; trainee-centred instruction; and the management of YTS.

24. Thus a variety of patterns of experience are possible, all of which could meet the objectives of the scheme. The checklist and profile provide a 'template' which can be applied to a range of existing or new provisions, and which recognises the possibility of the cumulative nature of experience. The scheme depends on promoting the ability of staff themselves to analyse their needs, and to seek ways of meeting those needs with the help of relevant agencies. An individual will retain his/her own checklist record so that achievement can be agreed and negotiated with the agency assisting to develop that particular area of skills. Figure G opposite shows a specimen page from the checklist record or logbook, while Figure H on page 74 provides the summary record which is returned to the Board so that the Certificate can be issued.

25. One major element of the pilot stage of the scheme will be to investigate different methods of agreeing achievement. The assessor/evaluator appointed by the Board will discuss with the pilot institutions different methods of providing evidence of competence. These may include written tasks, log books, group assignments, observation of teaching/training in different environments, production of learning materials, etc. The role of the evaluator/assessor is to support the promotion of the 'teaching skills' philosophy embodied in the scheme, to advise and assist local staff developers, and to discuss with them the operation of the scheme and ways in which it could be amended/improved.

26. This supportive evaluation is partly funded by the FEU and forms part of their programme of Research Projects.* The Project is supervised by a steering committee on which sit representatives of RSA, FEU, HM Inspectorate, MSC and different types of training providers, e.g., accredited centres, FE Colleges, etc. It will result in a report which will include recommendations and guidance to centres as to how the 'teaching skills' approach can be operated in practice, how difficulties (personal and institutional) of operating it can be overcome, how any standard patterns (e.g., accredited centre programmes) match the checklist, and examples of good practice. It will also include an assessment of the practicalities of achieving national accreditation (and thus credit transfer) of local staff development programmes of this sort.

27 This scheme demonstrates the potential of a profile system as a means of opening access, of accrediting experiential learning (there are no course *requirements*), of establishing credit transfer of achievement gained in a variety of different situations, and of certificating competence in the performance of tasks rather than theoretical knowledge.

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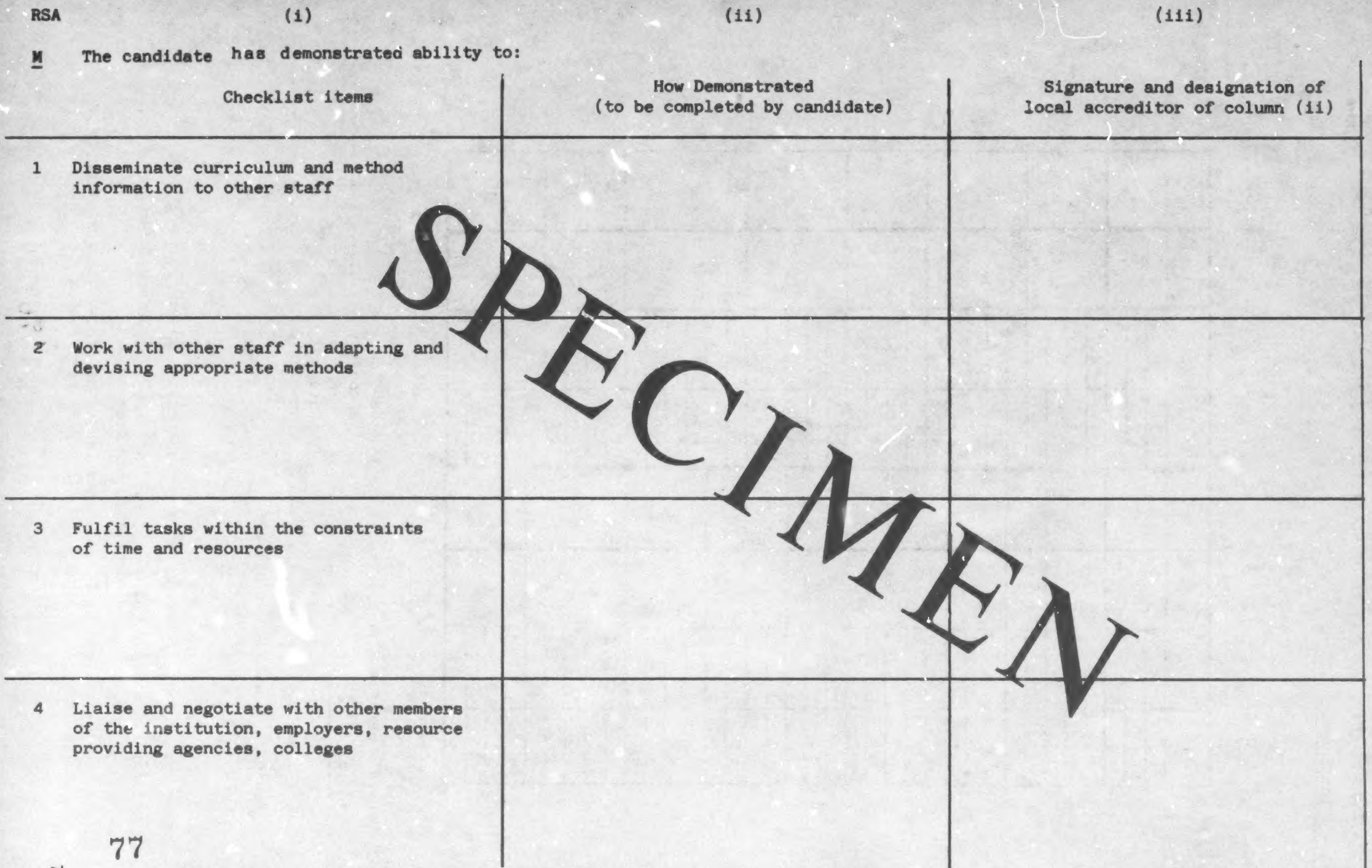
*FEU Research Project 165.



RSA (i) (ii) (iii)

M The candidate has demonstrated ability to:

Checklist items	How Demonstrated (to be completed by candidate)	Signature and designation of local accreditor of column (ii)
1 Disseminate curriculum and method information to other staff		
2 Work with other staff in adapting and devising appropriate methods		
3 Fulfil tasks within the constraints of time and resources		
4 Liaise and negotiate with other members of the institution, employers, resource providing agencies, colleges		

SPECIMEN

Figure G RSA Certificate for Tutors of Vocational Preparation

Figure H

RSA - CERTIFICATE FOR TUTORS OF VOCATIONAL PREPARATION

Checklist summary

Candidate's name ....

(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
A 1				K 1			
A 2				K 2			
A 3				K 3			
B 1				L 1			
B 2				L 2			
B 3				L 3			
C 1				L 4			
C 2				M 1			
D 1				M 2			
D 2				M 3			
D 3				M 4			
E 1				M 5			
E 2				N 1			
E 3				N 2			
F 1				N 3			
F 2				[illegible]			
F 3				O 1			
F 4				O [illegible]			
F 5				[illegible]			
G 1				O 4			
G 2				O 5			
G 3				P 1			
G 4				P 2			
H 1				P 3			
H 2				P 4			
H 3				P 5			
H 4				P 6			
I 1				Q 1			
I 2				Q 2			
I 3				Q 3			
I 4				Q 4			
I 5							
J 1							
J 2							
J 3							
J 4							

SPECIMEN

Candidate's address ....

....

....

Candidate's signature ....

Date of submission to RSA ....

The fee of .... is enclosed

Notes

Column (ii) : tick if demonstration of competence accredited on pages 1 - 17

Column (iii): insert A, B, ...Q if candidate and local accreditor agree that evidence of competence has been shown

Column (iv) : initials of local accreditor (a different accreditor may of course be signing for different competences)

Conclusion

28. The schemes described above represent a (partial) snapshot of the Board's activities in profiling over the last year or two. A number of guiding principles can be discerned.

(i) All the schemes focus on learner competence, i.e., they seek to accredit demonstrated abilities.

(ii) Consequently, the schemes show that profiles can be applied across the curriculum to *all levels of ability* and counter suggestions that they should be confined to certain groups only.

(iii) All the schemes seek to encourage learners and teachers to raise their sights above the inculcation and recall of knowledge, to the rehearsal and performance of activities and roles demanded of adults.

(iv) By using a consistent terminology, the schemes are designed to encourage progression into and through employment and further education.

(v) Responsiblity for initial assessment rests with those directly in contact with learners. Tutors and supervisors are entrusted with the role which, in practice, only they can perform satisfactorily: to decide whether the learner/trainee can undertake and complete the task set.

(vi) This task (or assignment) based approach nevertheless permits national standards to be applied to local assessment: sample checklisted tasks, together with discussions with national assessors, indicate the definition of what constitutes satisfactory achievement of a particular objective.

(vii) An approach of this sort helps to provide a bridge between education and industry and a means of recognising experiential learning.

(viii) The schemes all have a clearly understandable link between their formative assessment processes and summative assessment. The weakness of certain types of profile that have been in use elsewhere in the last few years is that there is no obvious mechanism for arriving at the summative profile. The RSA system, where the final profile statements can be shown to derive directly from checklisted assignments, does not have that weakness. This is, of course, an advantage both to the owner of the profile (the student) and any prospective 'consumer' (the employer, the admissions officer) – as they can have faith in the reliability of the assessment – and to the teachers and tutors operating the scheme who are able to operate a comparatively straightforward assessment and record-keeping system.

(ix) By avoiding prescription of content of courses, the schemes do not dehumanize the curriculum. By allowing teachers to negotiate the contexts within which they operate, the RSA profiles, in fact, offer considerable opportunities for positive enrichment of the learning experiences made available.

29. Development work is continuing on the various RSA profile schemes. Interesting aspects of these developments include the possibilities for computer-assisted record-keeping which are the subject of an FEU publication* and of FEU Research Projects.** A development of a different kind being considered on a pilot basis by some local education authorities is a joint venture with the RSA to implement the proposals outlined by Tyrrell Burgess and Elizabeth Adams.*** The authors propose that all 16 year olds receive a statement of their achievements during the last two years of compulsory education. Such a statement could contain reference to external examinations and graded tests, as well as to those achievements assessed by other means. Local validation, and local and national accreditation, would be a feature of any such scheme.

30. Experience gained at RSA suggests, therefore, that there are now great opportunities for major advances in the ways in which the achievements of learners are described. Further, with sensible decision-taking in relation to CPVE and YTS, a coherent and co-ordinated approach could become a reality rather than a mirage.

**Computer aided profiling*. FEU, 1983
**Research Projects 80, 86, 170 and 198
***Burgess, T. and Adams, E. *Outcomes of education* Macmillan, 1980. See also Mansell, J., A burst of interest in Profiles FEU, 1982

6. Regional Developments

The Avon Profile Initiative

Gloria Hitchcock

1. The County of Avon Education Authority, in response to a growing concern about methods of assessment, interest in surveys undertaken by the Schools Council, and awareness of various initiatives in student profiling by some examinations boards,* decided to second the author to the University of Bristol for the Spring Term, 1983, with a brief to investigate and provide examples of significant work in the field of profiles. Following presentations by Brian Goacher and George Pearson from the Schools Council to secondary head teachers in Avon, it was agreed that a positive approach should be adopted: efforts should be made to develop a profile, building on existing experience elsewhere, which could be offered for use in Avon Schools. The County of Avon Working Party on Profiles was set up in January 1983, and it was agreed, after discussion with LEA advisers, that the term's secondment should be used to engage in a series of visits to schools and colleges, and in discussion with leading figures in profile development.**

2. For the purpose of the survey, and for this article, a 'profile' is defined as:

'a document comprising collections of different assessments, made by teachers and students, of an individual student's qualities; these usually include information on skills, attitudes, subject attainments, behaviour and traits.'

METHODOLOGY

3. Interviews were carried out initially with twenty nine individuals known nationally for their contribution to the debate on profiling and, subsequently, in twelve schools and three colleges of further education. The schools and colleges, spread throughout England and Wales, were selected on the basis of recommendations arising from interviews with these key figures. In schools or colleges which were visited in person the head (or principal) and seven or eight staff were interviewed, plus a group of seven or eight students. Where personal visits were not possible contact was by letter or telephone and the information was obtained from the head or from the member of staff responsible for profiling.

4. Interviews conducted on the basis of a standard questionnaire, complemented by a structured interview, were considered. However, in view of the complex and somewhat amorphous nature of the topic, it was decided to adopt a free response, unstructured interview technique. Interviewees were free to expand upon their individual perceptions, interests and areas of activity. In order that there should be some cohesive pattern to the information obtained, emphasis was placed on certain key factors to ensure that all topics about which information was sought had been covered. These key factors were identified initially on the basis of the author's reading, knowledge, and teaching experience, and were developed during the interviews with key figures. The findings of the survey are presented under the headings of these factors.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Reasons for introducing profiles

5. Teachers in the schools/colleges surveyed demonstrated an eagerness to develop a profile system and gave many reasons for this, three of which were mentioned by staff in all the institutions. These were:

(i) dissatisfaction with the current examination system, and its effect upon so many of the schools' population;

(ii) determination to provide young people with a worthwhile statement relating to their achievements;

(iii) a wish to motivate pupils by involving them in a form of assessment more relevant to their interests and needs.

Other reasons given included the desire to provide comprehensive information, not only on cognitive learning, which would have relevance for employers, further and higher education staff and the careers service. It was recognised that profiles could emphasise pupils' good points and aid diagnosis of weaknesses, and that they had potential for aiding staff-development in assessment skills. Lastly, teachers expressed an awareness of the curriculum implications of integrated learning/assessment procedures.

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*These initiatives included development work carried out by both the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations and the South Western Examinations Board.

**The generous and unstinting help proffered by all those who were approached is greatly appreciated.

Profile development

6. There was less agreement on how to develop and introduce profiles than on why they were needed. These differences appeared to reflect the perceived aims and audience of the profile. Some schools started from the premise that liaison with employers in the development and marketing of the profile was essential and was, moreover, an important feature in user acceptance of profiles. Others took the view that the whole thrust of the profile, and the reason for its introduction, was pupil-centred: that it was the individual's self-development and self-esteem which was important, and that external users were secondary to this position. (These views need not necessarily be incompatible). Some schools, therefore, involved employers in the planning stage (in some cases with employers actually funding the project), in others the links were negligible.

Profile content

7. It was difficult to analyse and categorise the considerable range of profiles encountered during visits to schools and colleges because individual schools rarely adopted one pure type of assessment. Although some were produced in entirety by the schools themselves, and others were devised by external bodies such as the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), profiles were frequently an amalgam of several types. There were considerable differences in emphasis. Some schools had definite frameworks for cognitive testing with rigid pass marks before entry on a profile. Others, such as those consisting entirely of pupil recording, contained *no* cognitive testing.

8. Some indication of the differences in the dimensions covered in the profiles considered can be gained from Tables A to D (which are not intended to be representative of all the profiles surveyed). It can be seen from Table A that there was a wide discrepancy in length, with profiles ranging from one to thirty six pages. Moreover, although some profiles were compiled continuously or at regular intervals, the majority were completed only when students left school or college.

A-L Schools M-R Post School Training or External Bodies

Name	Document Title	Number of pages	When compiled	Student Contribution
A	School Leaving Report	4	On leaving	None
B	16 + Profile	8	On leaving	2 pages
C	Pupil Profile	9 +	On leaving	1 + pages
D	Achievement Certificate	11	On leaving	1 page
E	16 + Pupil Profile (1983)	7 +	On leaving	1 + pages
F	16 + Pupil Profile (1981)	7	On leaving	1 page
G	Pupil Profile	9	On leaving	1 page
H	Personal Achievement Record	8	Continuously	2 pages
I	Student Profile	3 +	Continuously	1 + (half)
J	Diploma	up to 36	Continuously	11 pages
K	Leavers Profile Report	3	On leaving	None
L	Year Progress sheet (draft)	1	Half yearly	None
M	Profile	12	On leaving	1 page
N	365 Profile Report	8	Periodic	Extensive
O	YTS Final Profile	4	Joint agreement	Extensive
P	Practical Communication Profile	2	At completion	None
Q	Profile Report	5	At completion of year	None
R	Profile & Review Book	7 +	Weekly	Extensive

Table A: Profiles Considered

A-L Schools M-R Post School Training or External Bodies

Name	Subjects Studied	Skills		Personal Achievements	Community Service	Examinations Awards: Results obtained and anticipated	Attendance Punctuality	Observation & Comment	
		Cognitive	Personal & Social					Staff	Pupil
A	✓	✓	✓					✓	
B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
F	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
G	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
H	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
I	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
J	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
K	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
L	✓	✓	✓				✓		
M		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
N	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
O		✓	✓	✓		✓			
P		✓	✓					✓	✓
Q		✓	✓					✓	✓
R	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Table B: Breakdown of Profile Contents

9. As can be seen from Table B, the greatest area of agreement on content concerned cognitive and personal/social skills, which were included in all examples. The greatest discrepancy, particularly in profiles from external bodies, occurred in the area of attendance/punctuality and community service. The profiles used in three schools in the survey included all the categories encountered.

10. When the profiles were analysed in terms of skills (Table C overleaf) it appeared that, whilst there was little difference in most of the skill categories between schools and external bodies, schools were less likely to include assessment of visual understanding and expression. From Table D, which shows the breakdown of personal qualities into separate categories, it can be seen, perhaps not surprisingly, that the most frequently occurring categories were 'social relationships'; 'perseverance/reliability'; and 'initiative'. Interestingly only one school commented on 'decision-making' and only two schools commented on 'maturity' and 'self awareness', qualities which many teachers would claim to value.

A-L Schools M-R Post School Training or External Bodies	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Number	Other e.g. French	Co-ordination	Manual Dexterity	Visual Understanding and Expression	Creativity	Method of Presenting Assessment (If grid, number of options)
A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Grid (4)
B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	Comment Bank
C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Comment Bank
D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	Tutor Comments
E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Grid (3) & Comments
F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	Grades A-E
G	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			Criterion Checklist
H	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Criterion Checklist
I	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
J		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Grades A-E
K	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	Grid (3)
L	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	Grades A-E
M	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Grid (4) & Comments
N	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Grid (4) + example of work + experience checklist
O	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
P	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	Criterion Checklist
Q	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Grid (4) & personal recording
R	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		Varied

Table C: Skills breakdown

A-L Schools M-R Post School Training or External Bodies	Adaptability Flexibility	Perseverance Reliability	Initiative	Self-confidence	Self Awareness	Leadership	Co-operation	Social Relationships	Courtesy	Decision making	Appearance	Honesty, Truthfulness	Responsibility	Maturity	Method of Presenting Assessment
A		✓	✓												Grade A-E
B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										Comment Bank
C	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Comment Bank
D		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Tutor Comments
E	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓							Comment Bank
F		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			✓			Grade A-E
G						✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		Criterion Checklist
H						✓	✓				✓		✓		Criterion Checklist
		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		Pupil/teacher statements
J		✓	✓	✓							✓				Grade A-E
K		✓	✓					✓							Grid (4)
L							✓	✓							Grade A-E
M			✓		✓			✓		✓					Grid (4)
N	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	Grid (4) + example of work + experience checklist
O	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
P															Criterion Checklist
Q								✓					✓		Grade A-E Grid & personal recording
R	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Varied

Table D: Personal Qualities

Teachers' attitudes towards profiles

11. One of the most important factors determining success or failure in the introduction of profiles is teacher attitude. It was clear from discussions with teachers that they were conscious of the demands made upon them in terms of time and effort. There was no clear consensus regarding whether *extra* time was involved or whether, with some re-organisation, it could really mean a *different use* of time. Among the most striking findings were that virtually all teachers who had been involved with profiling believed that they were helping their students, that student motivation was increased, and that any extra work was therefore worthwhile. This contrasts with the research carried out by the SCRE which suggested that teachers were not prepared to take on the extra workload.* One hard-pressed teacher said:

'It is not easy, but in the long term if it benefits the children, the staff and school, it is worth making the effort.'

A note of caution was, however, sounded by a deputy head with considerable experience of, and commitment to, profiles when he said:

'If it is not realistic in terms of teacher time and in-service training, then it will not happen.'

12. The need for staff development and in-service training was mentioned by several teachers, some of whom noted the difficulties of defining skills so that they matched the spread of students' abilities. It was recognised that profiles were not without their drawbacks, or even dangers: foremost amongst these was the risk of subjecting the individual to a degree of exposure which extended far beyond that which might be desirable. This risk may have lain behind some teachers' reluctance to comment upon the personal qualities and characteristics of the pupils. Other teachers countered these arguments by asserting that, since such assessments were already made, it was preferable that they be open.** Rather than retaining the secrecy of the confidential reference, assessments would thus be available for student comment. On the whole, initial reluctance or opposition tended to wane as the benefits to students became apparent and as teachers' relationships with students improved through more systematic contact.

Students' attitudes towards profiles

13. Students seemed to appreciate the extra teacher attention necessary for the completion of profiles, and the opportunities thus presented for discussion of non-academic matters. Indeed, some students would have liked more focus on personal qualities, although others considered they did not need a statement from school to make them aware of the importance of such attributes. Profiles were considered to increase motivation and to be of potential use in job interviews, although some students queried whether this would apply only with local employers.

Employers' attitudes towards profiles

14. The views of heads and teachers on employers' attitudes towards profiles suggested that schools varied considerably in the importance they attached to links with employers, and in the perceived value to them of profiles. Some staff were of the opinion that the majority of employers, regardless of the scale of their business operations, welcomed profiles in principle. Others thought that large companies preferred their own selection procedures and small companies lacked the expertise to understand profiles.

Practical considerations

15. Staff in the schools and colleges surveyed were asked about internal and external support for the extra demands made by profiling, and about the degree of co-operation with other institutions. Local authorities varied in the level of support (in terms of extra teaching and/or clerical staff) which they were prepared to offer. Some had allocated additional help during the piloting period whilst others expected the work to be carried out within the framework of normal school activities. Most erred on the side of parsimony so that schools had to meet additional teaching, clerical and financial demands from their own resources. Only one authority provided a rolling

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*Scottish Council for Research in Education. *Pupils in profile*, Hodder and Stoughton 1977

**See discussion by Geoff Stanton in Section 3.

programme of in-service training for staff in assessment, record-keeping and guidance. Elsewhere the situation was less clearly defined although most schools and colleges had established working parties and held regular meetings.

16. Although all the institutions in the survey were willing to co-operate in providing information on profiles and in sharing any expenses incurred, co-operative contacts with other institutions ranged from being regular and structured, to not existing at all. There were instances of local employers giving moral and, in some cases, financial support. Indeed some staff expressed the view that employers were more willing to give money in a philanthropic gesture 'to help children' than to use profiles in selection for employment.

17. It must be clear from this brief resumé that it is difficult to generalise about profiles on the basis of the survey findings. Even in such a small and unrepresentative sample, there are considerable variations in the reasons for introducing profiles, in their format and content, and in users' attitudes towards them. One of the most difficult problems in attempting to analyse and categorise the findings lies in the fact that any profile is rarely of one pure type. It is rarely possible to say that school A uses a particular kind of profile, for more often schools have chosen an eclectic approach.

18. An attempt has been made, however, to relate the practice within schools and colleges to a theoretical model in order to provide a framework for discussion of the different kinds of profiles used in assessment. The classification below consists of the *major* elements adopted in each model but it is not intended to be a definitive categorisation, more an aid to appreciating the major characteristics of different profiles. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that there is some degree of overlap between the groups.

DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFILES

19. The profiles are classified into four groups:

- Comment banks
- Criterion checklists
- Profile grids
- Personal recording

The advantages and disadvantages of each group are discussed below.

Comment banks

20. Once the areas of student achievement which are to be assessed are decided upon, a bank of statements (usually between 10 and 30) relating to each area is compiled. Teachers may abstract statements representing the most appropriate student descriptors. These statements, expressed initially in code (A3, B4, C6 etc.), are translated into a series of prose descriptions appropriate to each student.

Advantages

(i) Comment banks avoid grading and labelling students, for example on a norm-referenced 1-5 scale.

(ii) A potentially wide and accurate range of descriptors is available which is likely to provide positive comments meaningful to both student and potential user.*

(iii) Comment banks ensure a greater degree of comparability than is possible with free response.

(iv) The use of coding for computers and word processors makes it possible to reduce the amount of clerical work.

Disadvantages

(i) Comments may give little idea of what students have *not* achieved, which may be a disadvantage to the user. This could be remedied if the booklet containing the complete list of possible comments were made available to interested parties.

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*See, for example, *Profile reporting in Wales*. Schools Council Committee for Wales, 1983

(ii) Staff making the assessment need to familiarise themselves with the range of comments available but, even so, there is a danger that one or two 'middle of the road' comments in each areas will be used so frequently as to become the norm.

(iii) Some practitioners consider comment banks to be less suitable for assessing certain competencies, for example, in numeracy.

Criterion checklists

21. The aim of a criterion checklist profile is to remove, as far as possible, the elements of subjectivity and grading in assessment. The essence of the approach lies in the compilation of a list of indentifiable skills accompanied by specific criteria against which performance may be measured. A student's mastery of a particular skill is validated with reference to these criteria, as expressed in a range of descriptors. The skills are set out in documents which may vary in size and scope. The small log book (the Personal Achievement Record or PAR) provided at Evesham High School is in complete contrast to the wide-ranging series of dossiers* provided by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), although the approach is basically similar.

Advantages

(i) Criterion checklists allow students to demonstrate mastery of specific skills without reference to the level of achievement of the group.

(ii) A list of competencies can be presented in a form which enables easy assimilation.

(iii) Since progress is measured by mastery of increasingly challenging criteria, students tend to be involved in assessment continuously, not just at examination time, and should be better able to understand the rationale on which it is based.

Disadvantages

(i) Like many comment bank profiles, students' completed criterion checklists may give little indication of what has not been achieved.

(ii) The range of skills covered is limited by the size of the document. If a wide range is to be covered the document is lengthy and may require subsidiary/explanatory notes. Yet brevity can result in meaningless or ambiguous criteria.

(iii) The amount of staff/student involvement in formative interaction need only be slight and is dependent on the quality of tutoring, rather than being intrinsic to the method.

Profile grids

22. Profile grids present a series of hierarchical statements relating to a student's mastery (over five or six levels) of a specific skill. The grid usually consists of boxes which are ticked against the appropriate level of achievement, or of bars which can be shaded to the relevant level, to an upper limit.* In the Avon survey most profiles contained grid elements, frequently based on the FEU/CGLI approach. They were less common in schools which had developed a system to suit their own organisation than in schools new to profiling who accepted ready made systems. Some of the schools used formative grids in conjunction with summative criterion checklists.

Advantages

(i) Profile grids are able to indicate clearly what a student has achieved across a wide range of skills and personal qualities, as well as what has still to be undertaken or achieved.

(ii) Grids can be progressive, in which case students can be motivated to reach the next level.

(iii) The information is presented in a compact and uniform manner and, in the case of shaded bars, can be assimilated quickly.

Disadvantages

(i) Critics of grid style profiles argue that the fixed range of any parameter (constructed for the sake of uniformity) means that the steps are often uneven across a parameter, or that the distance from one level to the next is so great as to be unattainable in practice.

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*See the contribution by RSA to Section 5.

*See contribution by CGLI to Section 5.

(ii) Grids tend to encourage labelling and comparison between students.

(iii) There is a danger that employers and other users will only look at the top level attainable and overlook any lower levels of achievement.

Personal recording

23. A significant development in the search for new forms of accreditation has been the growth of personal student recording, with a completely different emphasis from those forms of assessment involving judgements by teachers. The emphasis is upon the students' image of themselves.

Advantages

(i) Student personal recording is a formative process. The method is entirely student centred with feelings, interests and personal development being of paramount importance.

(ii) The development of a positive self image, of self confidence, and of the skills of self-assessment is held to be an excellent preparation for adult life.

(iii) Since the document is confidential and is the property of the student there is no sense of being compared with peers.

(iv) Discussion and a good relationship between student and teacher are encouraged.

Disadvantages

(i) Personal recording is perceived frequently as the purlieu of students not taking public examinations.

(ii) The records have little value as currency in comparison with external examinations/assessments.

(iii) There is no summative component inherent in the system.

Summary of different kinds of profiles

24. It is evident that there are both strengths and weaknesses inherent in each type of profile: schools rarely use one type, but more often select elements from several. It is hoped that this section, identifying the main types of profile and offering an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each, will provide schools with a basis from which they may identify the strengths which fit their own particular needs. It was certainly the hope of the Avon Working Party that the analysis would aid their own profile development work.

The Avon Initiative

25. On the basis of information and examples gathered during the course of this study, the County of Avon Working Party on Profiles has been developing a profile which it is hoped will be offered to volunteer schools for piloting in September 1984. Having considered the several different profiles which emerged from the Avon Survey, the Working Party has proposed drawing elements from each. This is acknowledged where the sections are described in paragraph 26. The aim of the profile is to provide:

(i) a means for students to become aware of their progress and strengths and weaknesses;

(ii) a means for students to record their continuous assessment, having discussed this with their teachers;

(iii) a means of stating objectives which will help them understand what they are doing and why, for each section of the students' education;

(iv) a basis on which references and reports are written to employers, parents and/or further education establishments.

26. The profile is still at the development stage but it is anticipated that it will be used with students of all abilities and will be built up within a formative framework leading to a summative end statement. A loose leaf format with a slide binder and cover is envisaged. The profile will probably have four sections:

(i) personal achievements in and out of school (personal recording);

(ii) personal qualities (freely recorded, under suggested headings from which the student may select);

(iii) basic skills attainments (comment bank);

(iv) school subject attainments (separate student and teacher statements).

The four sections are designed to enable students to learn something about themselves and about their education. All entries would be discussed with tutors and/or teachers and amended if necessary. The profile would be kept in school by the student and would be taken away on leaving school at which stage any external examination results would be recorded.

27. Two points of particular interest are the assessments of personal qualities and of school subjects:

Personal qualities
Pupils will probably be asked to select from a list of suggested personal qualities, and to assess themselves in these areas. The form will then be passed to the tutor for his or her comments before discussion and possible amendment.

School subjects
It is proposed that, at the beginning of each half term, the pupil, under the guidance of the subject teacher, will set out immediate objectives. At the end of the half term the pupil will comment on his or her attainment in the light of these objectives, and the teacher will subsequently add his or her views.

28. It is hoped that these activities will encourage young people to develop skills in self-assessment and self-awareness; to enable them to set realistic objectives in terms of school work and personal behaviour; and to give them responsibility for a large area of their own assessment. It is also seen as a way of encouraging development of the formative aspects of profiling, which so many teachers seek.

Conclusion

29. The findings of the Avon Profile Initiative indicate that there is a genuine need among heads, staff and students for some new form of certification which can give credit to students for achievements, skills and characteristics so often ignored by external examinations, whilst at the same time increasing communication and understanding between teacher and student.

30. The Avon Working Party has been fortunate in being able to draw on a wealth of experience and expertise and to take what is considered to be the most appropriate elements from current profiles to aid the development of the Avon Profile. The Working Party believes that, by attempting to develop genuinely formative assessment and recording, and by introducing an element of negotiation into relationships between teachers and students, it is in a position to make a significant advance in this area of assessment.

Profiling in Northern Ireland's Youth Training Programme

Hadden Wilson

Introduction

1. The Youth Training Programme (YTP) in Northern Ireland commenced in the autumn of 1982 with profiling arrangements regarded as an integral part of the programme. The scope of the Youth Training proposals are comprehensive, covering all young people in the 16-17 year band whether they are at school, at work, or unable to find work. However, for operational reasons, the profiling arrangements have so far been extended mainly to that group of young people who have left school, are unable to find work and are therefore taking advantage of the guaranteed year of vocational preparation. All such young people are the subjects of profiling as an obligatory feature in their training and every effort is being made to adapt the process and render it sufficiently flexible to meet the varying requirements of the target group.

2. In consultations prior to the introduction of the Youth Training Programme there was little deviation from the view that traditional systems of assessment which rely exclusively on examinations are inadequate for schemes of vocational preparation. The assessment and recording of experiential learning, of attitudes and of personal qualities, require the introduction on a wide scale of new techniques and procedures. These developments suggested the need for some system of profiling but left some difficult questions to be resolved. Should more than one profiling system be piloted in Northern Ireland? If not, then which single system would be the most appropriate to the Youth Training Programme?

3. Northern Ireland has a population of approximately 1.5 million and it was estimated that up to 10,000 young people could be involved in guaranteed year schemes. Compared with early estimated figures for YTS this was a relatively small number and it was agreed that to subdivide it further, for the purpose of piloting different profiling models, would be unwise. It was also argued that a common profile within YTP would have greater status than any one of a number of pilot profiles could assume. The decision was taken to have a common profiling model for Northern Ireland and attention turned to the problem of selecting the most appropriate model.

4. An impressive body of literature describing various profiling systems was already available early in 1982. This was scrutinised and eventually the inter-departmental executive committee (the members of which are drawn from the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland) which has overall responsibility for YTP, adopted the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) grid profiling process.* This decision was strongly influenced by the fact that the CGLI model was already operational in a number of YOP schemes and that it was being developed in the context of all three elements of YTP, namely training, work experience and further education. Moreover, the model was considered to be particularly appropriate because it involved trainees in their own profiling. It was well understood that the profiling process was far from fully developed and in adopting the CGLI model Northern Ireland assumed the dual role of user and co-developer with other users in the United Kingdom.

The CGLI grid profiling process in Northern Ireland

5. It is essential to describe the mechanics of the profiling process and yet in doing so a danger emerges. This is the possibility that profiling will be seen as a form-filling exercise and a superficial mechanical application of the process will result.

6. The system has four components:

- logbooks
- reviews
- progress profiles
- final profile report.

Figure 1 overleaf illustrates the relationship between the 4 components.

7. The logbook or record maintained by the trainee of what he or she has done and learned is the fundamental building block of the profiling process. Initially it was assumed that the logbook would be completed on a daily basis by all trainees. In a large number of instances this has proved neither possible nor necessary. While daily

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*See Section 5 'CGLI: The Profiling of Basic Abilities'.

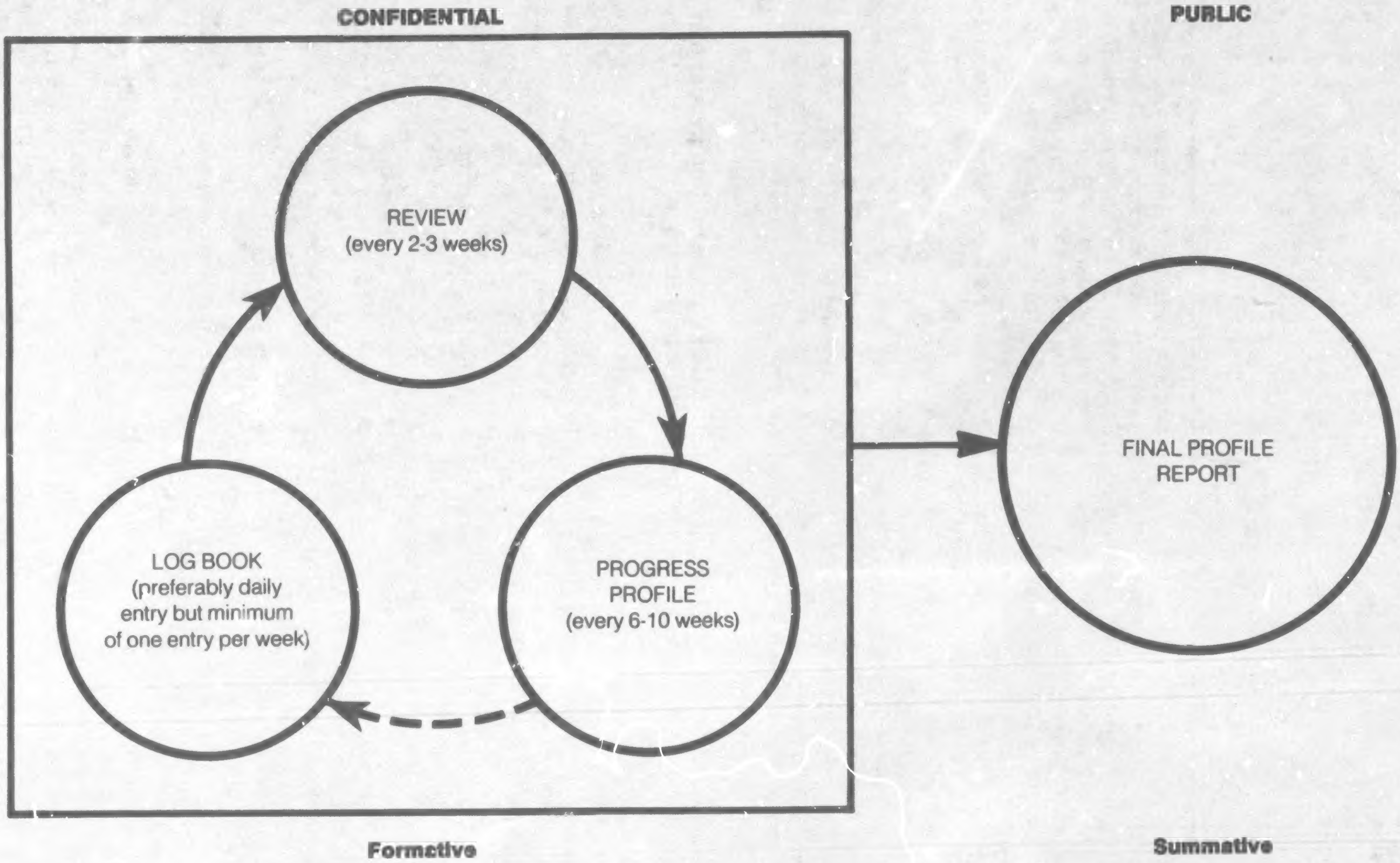
CONFIDENTIAL
PUBLIC
REVIEW
(every 2-3 weeks)
LOG BOOK
(preferably daily
entry but minimum
of one entry per week)
PROGRESS
PROFILE
(every 6-10 weeks)
FINAL PROFILE
REPORT
Formative
Summative

Figure 1 The CGLI Profiling System as used in YTP

entries are still advocated, a more flexible approach has emerged with one week being allowed between entries in exceptional cases. The most important thing is that a reliable body of information is recorded by the trainee as a basis upon which subsequent review sessions can be constructed.

8. In the first year of YTP, trainees were issued with an attractive plastic logbook folder which was common to all young people engaged in the guaranteed year. This folder carried the daily log and all subsequent review and progress profile documents. It was not a practical arrangement and the folders too readily became dog-eared and unpresentable with such frequent handling. It became apparent also that, because of the varying degrees of literacy in YTP, A4 lined sheets were not always the most suitable format on which the log could be recorded. In an effort to meet the varying needs of young people in terms of degrees of literacy and different types of schemes being followed (for example, engineering skills, catering, commercial etc.) four models of logbook are now available. The most suitable is selected and in every case it is maintained as an entity separate from the other less frequently completed documents of the profiling process. The four types of logbook are:

- a conventional A5 hard backed notebook with lines and margins
- a simple plastic covered loose leaf folder
- a plastic pocket folder
- a scrap-book.

9. Every two or three weeks each young person's progress is reviewed on a one-to-one basis with his or her tutor. During these review sessions the most noteworthy, specific examples of achievement are selected and recorded, together with a synopsis of progress made. Areas requiring attention are highlighted and remedial action is proposed. The review document (Figure 2 overleaf) is agreed and signed by both the trainee and his or her tutor to emphasise the negotiated, joint nature of the conclusions drawn.

10. At intervals of approximately 6-10 week a full profile of each young person is produced. These were originally referred to as 'Interim Profile Reports' but that term has given way to 'Progress Profiles'. It is on these that the now familiar grid first appears. The CGLI Mark 3 Progress Profile,* which Northern Ireland has adopted for YTP during 1983/84, has five levels of attainment plus a possible overshoot column. Experience in Northern Ireland with an earlier four level grid contributed to the introduction of the new very basic column and the improved simpler wording of the various descriptors in the grid boxes.

11. In completing Progress Profiles the best specific examples of achievement demonstrating the use of each skill are recorded on the left-hand side of the sheet. A substantial element of staff training is necessary to develop the ability to recognise and concisely record specific achievements. Only when this is successfully done can the next step be taken which is to move to the right-hand side of the Progress Profile sheet and determine which grid descriptor best fits the specific achievement recorded opposite. This process is repeated for each of the 14 basic skills referred to on the sheet and is the subject of discussion and negotiation with the young person concerned. The success and reliability of this exercise depends largely upon the experience of the tutor, his or her familiarity with the work of the trainee and the precision with which examples of achievements have been recorded.

12. The formative profiling cycle, consisting of log-keeping, reviewing and progress profiling, is completed several times (4-8) during the year and prepares the way for the issue of a summative Final Profile Report on completion of the programme. In order to preserve the individualised nature of each profile a computer printing process has been resorted to. This imposes essential constraints upon the volume of information to be printed and the manner in which it is compiled. A pro forma (Figure 3 on page 91) has been prepared to ensure reasonable structural consistency in the individual Final Reports from the various scheme providers. Figure 3 shows a copy of the 'Application for Final Profile Report', based on the same grid as the Progress Profile, which is designed to facilitate the computer printing process. This information leads to a computer printed Final Report similar in format to that contained in Section 5, CGLI, Profiling in Basic Abilities, Figure 5 (see page 58).

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*See Section 5 'CGLI: The Profiling of Basic Abilities' Figure 1.

Figure 2

REVIEW OF RECORD OF EXPERIENCE   REVIEW NO: 1   DATE: 7/10/83

After discussion and consideration of the logbook we have reached agreement that -

a. the following specific examples of achievement should be noted

Good progress has been made in the practical work associated with the glazing and firing modules. Denis has worked well in his workshop group and effectively demonstrated pottery technique to the others.

b. the following particular progress has been made

Interviewed well for work experience placement and successfully gained a place with a hotel chain.

c. attention needs to be given to

Attention should be paid to measuring aspects of numeracy.

d. the following action is to be taken

Course tutor to arrange with student counsellor suitable range of measuring activities.

e. further discussion points we wish to note are

Arrangements for residential period.
Transfer to more specialised catering training.
Travelling arrangements.

Signed Denis Smyth
(Trainee/Student)

Date 7 October 1983

Signed S. V. Carnders
(Supervisor/Tutor)

Date 7 October 1983

BEST COPY A

CITY AND GUILDS

IN CONFIDENCE

YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAMME

APPLICATION FOR PROFILE REPORT

This application should be completed using the Notes for Guidance.

1. Name of Trainee Denis Smyth

Date of Birth 0 1 1 2 6 6 — EG for 12 Nov 1966 write 12 11 66 or 5 Jan 1967 write 05 01 67

Sex M — M or F

Home Postal Code B T 1 2 ▨ 6 A G

Registration № 1024

2. Scheme Organisers in 1982/83
(Write the name only and consult the Notes for Guidance for approved abbreviations. Make one entry per line).

	Postal Code	Date from	Date to
Ardcraig College of Further Education	B T 1 2 ▨ 7 J T	16 08 82	23 08 83
	B T ▨		
	B T ▨		
	B T ▨		

3. Brief description of the main areas of activity covered during the Programme.
(Write only on the lines and inside the box).

Pottery and glazing techniques. Firing procedures.
Hotel bar and kitchen work.

4. TRAINEE:
I accept the contents of the document and understand that they will be processed by computer.

Denis Smyth.

(A Profile Report cannot be issued without your signature).

ORGANISER:
We certify that the information in this application has been assembled on the basis of regular consultation between supervisors/tutors and trainees. Number of interim profiles completed. 5

Richard Butler.

5. PLEASE:

1. Make positive and specific statements only.
2. Write only on the lines and inside the boxes.
3. Write legibly or type.
4. Refer to the Notes for Guidance for specific examples.

COMMUNICATION

During Work Experience Denis was able to discuss with customers various types of drinks. He is also very capable of following written instructions regarding the firing of the kiln in the pottery section

SOCIAL ABILITIES

Denis has shown himself to be a very able team member when new trainees have entered the section. He was more than willing to pass on information regarding manufacture of cups and plates. He would like to pursue a career in hotel work.

PRACTICAL and NUMERICAL ABILITIES

Denis has become very proficient in putting on handles and glazing and painting pottery items. He was very capable of totalling the prices of drinks and giving correct change to customers in the hotel.

DECISION MAKING ABILITIES

Denis was able to reach an amicable solution on working hours with the hotel management and approached the matter in a very sensible way. He realises he must carry out his job well in order to progress. He will seek advice regarding new aspects of job.

97

Please circle the appropriate code (0, 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) to indicate the highest level attained for each of the 14 abilities.

			(BASIC LEVEL)			(HIGH LEVEL)	
1 TALKING AND LISTENING	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can hold conversations with workmates, face-to-face or by 'phone. Can take messages.	Can follow and give simple descriptions and explanations.	Can communicate effectively with a range of people in a variety of situations.	Can present a logical and effective arguement. Can analyse other's arguments.	COMMUNICATION
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
2 READING AND WRITING	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can understand and write simple notices, labels and short notes.	Can follow and give straightforward written instructions and explanations.	Can use instruction manuals and can write reports describing work done.	Can select and criticise written data and use it to produce own written work.	
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
3 VISUAL UNDER-STANDING	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can interpret simple signs and indicators.	Can, after guidance, make use of basic graphs, charts, tables, drawings, etc.	Can interpret and use basic graphs, charts, tables and drawings unaided.	Can construct graphs, etc., and extract information to support arguments.	
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
4 WORKING WITH COLLEAGUES	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can co-operate with others when led.	Can work with other members of group to achieve common aims.	Understands own position and results of own actions within a group.	Can be active and decisive member of group. Can help and encourage others.	SOCIAL ABILITIES
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
5 WORKING WITH THOSE IN AUTHORITY	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can follow verbal instructions for simple tasks and can perform them under supervision.	Can follow a series of verbal instructions and carry them out independently.	Can carry out a series of tasks effectively, given minimum instructions.	Can inspire confidence in those in authority and communicate well with them.	
	0	1	2	3	4	[✓ 5]	
6 SELF-AWARENESS	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Is aware of own personality and situation.	Can determine own strengths, weaknesses and preferences with some guidance.	Has good basic understanding of own situation, personality and motivation.	Has a thorough understanding of own personality and abilities and their implications.	
	0	1	2	3	4	[✓ 5]	
7 USING EQUIPMENT	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	After demonstration, can use equipment safely to perform simple tasks.	With guidance, can use equipment safely to perform multi-step tasks.	Can select and use suitable equipment and materials for the job, without help.	Can set up and maintain equipment. Can identify/remedy common faults.	PRACTICAL and NUMERICAL ABILITIES
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
8 DEXTERITY AND CO-ORDINATION	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can use everyday implements, can lift, carry and set down objects as directed.	Can reliably perform basic manipulative tasks.	Can perform complex tasks requiring accuracy and dexterity.	Can perform tasks requiring a high degree of manipulative control.	
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
9 MEASURING	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can read graduated linear scales and dials.	Can measure out specified quantities of material by length, weight, etc.	Can set up and use simple precision instruments.	Can set up and use complex precision instruments.	
	0	1	2	[✓ 3]	4	5	
10 CALCULATING	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can identify size, shape, order, etc. Can add and subtract whole numbers.	Can use + / - / x / ÷ to solve single-step, whole number problems.	Can use + / - / x / ÷ to solve two-step problems. Can add and subtract decimals.	Can use + / - / x / ÷ to solve multi-step problems. Can multiply and divide decimals.	
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
11 PLANNING	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	After demonstration, can identify the sequence of steps in a routine task.	Can choose from given alternatives the best way of tackling a task.	Can modify/extend given plans/routines to meet changed circumstances.	Can create new plans/routines from scratch, using all sources of help.	DECISION MAKING ABILITIES
	0	1	2	[✓ 3]	4	5	
12 INFORMATION SEEKING	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can find information with guidance from supervisor.	Can use standard sources of information.	Can assemble information from several sources.	Shows initiative in seeking and gathering information from a wide variety of sources.	
	0	1	2	3	4	[✓ 5]	
13 COPING WITH PROBLEMS	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	With guidance, can cope with simple, everyday problems.	Can cope with complex but routine problems. Seeks help if needed.	Can cope with unusual problems by adapting familiar routines independently.	Can offer sensitive and effective help to other people facing problems.	
	0	1	2	3	[✓ 4]	5	
14 EVALUATING RESULTS	No opportunity to assess	Did not achieve basic level	Can assess own results with guidance. Asks for advice.	Can assess own output for routine tasks independently.	Can assess own performance and identify possible improvements.	Can identify other's difficulties and so help to improve group performance.	
	0	1	2	3	4	[✓ 5]	

7.

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

(In the form of a positive and objective brief reference).

Please write only on the lines and inside the box.

Denis has been an exceptional Trainee and was very willing to carry out all instructions given to him. He has demonstrated his ability to be a valuable and helpful member of a team. His work experience shows his pleasant and understanding personality.

8.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Please write only on the lines and inside the box.

9.

Please ensure that all appropriate sections have been completed accurately, legibly and in accordance with the Notes for Guidance.

The completed application must be forwarded to:

Department of Economic Development
YTP Planning Branch
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
BELFAST

10.

Please arrange for the issue of a Final Profile Report in accordance with the information in this application.

Signed Caroline Hughes.

(Principal, Manager or other Authorised person)

on behalf of Ardcrag college of F.E. (Scheme organiser)

Address

Date 1 0 0 8 8 3

CGLI:— We certify that the profiling process used by this organiser meets the requirements of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

Raymond J. Cleary. Assessor.

(This certification will be arranged by the Department of Economic Development).

YTP 127

Od. 8379526 7m 6/83 FPLtd.

13. The difficulty of obtaining consistency in the standard of presentation of the Final Profile Report should not be underestimated. These are public documents and it is essential not only to maintain the reliability of the contents but also to present them in a good standard of English. The assessors are responsible for reporting to CGLI on the quality of the profiling process in each centre and, although they examine a sample of the final applications as part of that process, they are not expected to check the wording of every one. The onus for ensuring clear expression, correct spelling and punctuation must rest with each scheme provider in the last analysis.

Quality control

14. The CGLI monitor the quality of the profiling process in YTP through a number of part-time assessors who answer to the Institute through a chief assessor also resident in Northern Ireland. The main roles of the assessors are:

to advise staff, where necessary, on the concepts and purposes of profiling;

to ensure that profiling is an integral part of each YTP guaranteed year scheme; and

to ensure that the profiling process is being carried out properly with respect to the logbooks, reviews and progress profiles.

Staff development

15. In May 1982, in anticipation of the launching of YTP, a two and a half day conference/course on profiling was arranged at the Ulster Polytechnic in co-operation with CGLI and the Counselling and Careers Development Unit (Leeds University). This was planned for about 200 members of staff from training and educational establishments and local authorities. The first half day was attended by managers and senior staff from many organisations proposing to provide YTP schemes. The idea of this first session was to explain the philosophy and principles of profiling. The following two days were designed to train those who could in turn make a start at training others to profile and at the same time begin practising profiling themselves. These days were not without value but the volume of staff development necessary for effective profiling had been underestimated. Minds and hearts cannot be won over to profiling in a half-day session and two days are barely enough to develop sufficient awareness to make a start in profiling much less to develop the proficiency to train others!*

16. This initial thrust in staff development has been supplemented by a variety of initiatives throughout the past year. Several short courses were held on profiling practice, a basic guide to profiling was produced (now being updated) and work is nearing completion on an introductory tape-slide programme which is being co-ordinated by the Further Education Staff Unit (FESU) located at the Ulster Polytechnic.

17. Some staff within YTP have, of necessity, had their first formal training in profiling procedures only after they have begun to use the process. Much still needs to be done, particularly with regard to training employers who are offering places within YTP. Nevertheless there are obvious advantages in providing in-service training for those who already have some exposure to the process. They can immediately make some assessment of the relevance of what is being offered and they can often contribute from experience.

18. During April, May and June 1983, a one-day course was provided in 14 venues throughout Northern Ireland for a total of about 400 college staff. These courses were co-ordinated by FESU and were in response to feedback on those matters causing the greatest difficulty. Two main themes emerged:

organisational requirements of profiling;

practical problems with progress profiling.

19. Profiling schemes which involve active student participation have particular organisational requirements. These were indicated by the following points made by experienced practitioners.

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*See Barbara Pearce's discussion of the staff development needs relating to profiling in Section 4.

(a) All staff and young people entering YTP should receive a programme of induction with regard to profiling.

(b) Each establishment should have a profiling co-ordinator.

(c) A profiling tutor should be clearly identified with each group of young people. Ideally each tutor should be responsible for the profiling of not more than 12 young people and he/she should have substantial class contact with the same group.

(d) A room or private area should be availabe for staff-student consultation on a one-to-one basis.

(e) Arrangements should be made for the safekeeping of profile documents, yet with access and easy retrieval by the young people concerned.

(f) A programme should be drawn up early in each session showing the completion dates for all reviews and progress profiles.

(g) Arrangements should be made for written or verbal communications between the profiling tutor and other staff involved with the same students.

(h) Time should be allowed for profiling; as a guideline one hour for 6-8 students per week is deemed reasonable.

20. Practical workshop sessions on progress profile completion were very worthwhile. These were largely designed by CGLI and concentrated upon the writing of specific achievements in an unambiguous fashion, the selection of the correct grid levels for these achievements, and the analysis of a variety of tasks in terms of the 14 skills being monitored.

21. Profiling involves staff in a role where counselling skills are required. It is clear that in-service training to develop such skills on a wider front will have to be considered when laying plans for future staff development on profiling.

Conclusions

22. Profiling, without any doubt, has a strong influence upon teaching strategies and upon the relationship that develops between the tutor and the young person. It is not possible to make useful value judgments on the basic skills being monitored without promoting learning through some activity based method. Only then can the tutor observe the strengths and personal qualities of the young people, together with those aspects requiring special attention and correction. The influence that profiling can have upon teaching methods is very significant in further education where the more traditional lecturing technique is often inappropriate to the needs of young people in the Youth Training Pogramme.

23. It would be less than honest to suggest that everyone has been happy with the introduction of profiling on such a large scale. There are those who consider that its introduction was too hasty, that there was inadequate consultation and that there is an excessive degree of compulsion. Nevertheless a survey of YTP scheme providers, carried out by the Departments of Economic Development and Education, Northern Ireland, showed the vast majority in favour of profiling in principle and in practice, provided that there remains a sensitivity to the need for review and change in the light of grassroots experience.

APPENDIX A

Records of achievement for school leavers: a draft policy statement[1]

DES/Welsh Office, November 1983

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1. "Boys and girls who stay at school until they are 16 may reasonably look for some record of achievement when they leave".* 20 years after the publication of the Newsom Report, most young people leave school after 11 or more years of education with no comprehensive record of their educational attainments. Although 6 out of 7 pupils obtain an examination certificate in at least 1 subject by the time they leave school, 1 out of 5 obtains a graded result** in fewer than 4 subjects and very few possess a record either of their knowledge and skills in other subjects or of experiences and achievements which reflect personal qualities and are not tested by examinations. Nevertheless, encouraging the development of good personal qualities and fostering opportunities for social development are both aspects of school education which may be valued as much as examination courses by teachers, parents, employers and others.

2. Some other European countries recognise the desirability of providing pupils with a record [illegible] their educational attainment in a range of academic subjects, and succeed in doing so for a higher proportion of their school population than do England and Wales. In Scotland the target group for examinations at 16+ will shortly be extended to cover 90% of the range of ability. In England and Wales, some LEAs, examination boards and individual schools have experimented with a different approach based on the development of profiles or records of achievement which can be offered to pupils when they leave school. Some of these local initiatives and the issues which they raise were described in a discussion paper*** published this year by HM Inspectorate; in the reports**** published by the Schools Council in 1982 and 1983; and in the booklet recently circulated by the National Union of Teachers°. The Welsh Joint Education Committee and Schools Council Committee for Wales have funded a three year survey and feasibility study with the ultimate aim of developing an outline profile which could be offered for use by schools generally. The final report, outline profile and supporting materials will shortly be distributed to local education authorities in Wales.

3. The further education examining bodies offer schemes of assessment based on "profile reports", usually in the form of a grid or checklist of skills and knowledge. The target group for these schemes is mainly in colleges of further education and they lie outside the scope of this statement.

4. Many serious difficulties need to be overcome before satisfactory and generally accepted records of achievement can be established for school leavers. The Secretaries of State believe that this objective is important enough to justify further effort and that the time has come to concert that effort so as to maximise the prospects of success. In their view it is now necessary to establish a framework of national policy and to provide some central co-ordination and financial assistance for those working in this field. This statement offers a set of principles and guidelines, and invites local education authorities and others to participate in a programme of action.

Aims

5. The Secretaries of State believe that records of achievement for school leavers should satisfy several different aims.

(1) Duly to acknowledge the totality of what pupils have done and achieved, and thus to do justice to their own efforts and to the efforts of teachers, parents, rate-payers and tax-payers to give them a good schooling.

(2) To improve pupils' motivation. There is evidence that some pupils who are at present poorly motivated would aspire to higher standards of attainment if they knew that their achievements and efforts would be formally recognised.

(3) To stimulate and assist schools in identifying individual pupils' needs and encouraging their progress. The compilation of a record of a pupil's achievement obliges schools both to consider whether the curriculum and organisation offer pupils the opportunity to develop the general, practical and

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[1] Reproduced with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

*"Half our Future". A report of the Central Advisory Council for Education. HMSO, 1963; Chapter 10.

**'O' level grades A-E; CSE grades 1-5 ('O' level grades A-C and CSE grade 1 are equivalent to standa[illegible] of former subject "pass" at 'O' level).

***"Records of Achievemen[illegible]6+: Some examples of Current Practice", DES 1983.

****"Profile Reports [illegible] Leavers", Janet Balogh, Longman for Schools Council 1982, "Recording Achievements at 16+", Brian Goacher, Longman for Schools Council 1983.

°"Pupil Profiles: A Discussion Document", NUT 1983.

social skills which are to be assessed and to review their arrangements for keeping and transmitting records on individuals.

(4) To offer pupils a certificate which is recognised and valued by employers and institutions of further education when the pupil seeks work or admission to a course. The intention is that most potential users, including, in particular, employers, members of the careers service and those responsible for the Youth Training Scheme and for selection to further and higher education, should gain from records of achievement a more rounded picture of candidates under consideration for jobs or courses; and that many should make direct use of this information in deciding how the applicant could best be employed, or for which jobs, training schemes or courses he should be advised to apply. The long term aim is to confer on records of achievement a measure of national currency by ensuring that all have certain characteristics in common and are therefore recognisable to employers and other prospective users in all parts of the country. The immediate aim is to secure adequate currency for records of achievement among employers and others in the locality of the school concerned.

These 4 aims are interdependent, and the national scheme which is envisaged should, ideally, satisfy all of them.

6. A record of achievement would not be a reference. A reference is a confidential appraisal of one individual by another which ought to be candid in respect of failings as well as strengths. A record of achievement would be available if desired, in personal interviews but it would belong to the pupil and he or she would decide when and to whom to show it. Moreover, if it is to satisfy some of the aims which are identified in the previous paragraph the record would need to be confined to the positive aspects of the pupil's career and personal qualities: it would not refer to failure or defects.

7. Naturally, the fact that the record of one pupil will give a different account from the record of another will enable the reader to make comparisons between the two; and the fewer the attainments recorded, the more likely would be the presumption that the pupil's school career was, comparatively, a failure. The general introduction of records of achievement carries a clear risk that those pupils who at school achieve little or nothing that can truthfully be regarded as a success will stand out even more sharply than they do at present as a poor prospect for employment. Users of records would need to bear in mind that the records, like examination results, are not necessarily a reliable guide to subsequent achievements. A pupil's response to what the school offers may be worse or better than his response to the circumstances of adult life and work, not least because people change as they mature and are subject to new experiences. The Secretaries of State recognise the need to pay special attention to reducing the risk that records of achievement may unjustly impute failure, particularly for those pupils whose special educational needs may limit some of their achievements.

8. The Secretaries of State wish to establish agreed principles as a basis for nationwide arrangements for records of achievement, controlled by local education authorities and capable of local or regional variation. The introduction of nationwide arrangements is necessarily a long-term objective. In some parts of the country local education authorities and examination boards have laid foundations on which to build; in others it would be necessary to start from scratch. In all areas the development and operation of such a scheme will compete for limited resources with other demands on teachers' time and professional skills. The Secretaries of State believe that it would now be helpful to accelerate the pace and scale of experimental activity by initiating a few pilot schemes designed to compare different ways of formulating and administering records of achievement, to test the claims which are made for the documents developed (and to judge the attendant risks), and to assess the implications of their widespread use. In particular, it is necessary to quantify the additional cost of making such provision and the time which teachers would need to devote to it.

Guiding principles

9. The Secretaries of State envisage that records of achievement will not be uniform in scope or presentation. Many young people obtain their first job in the area in which they complete their schooling and local employers

may have distinctive views on the manner in which information is presented and on the emphasis placed on different elements of the records. However, the Secretaries of State believe that certain guiding principles should be observed throughout England and Wales on such fundamental issues as the target group, the content, the authorship and the ownership of records of achievement.

The Target Group

10. Records of achievement should in principle be available to all school leavers at whatever age they leave school. Most if not all the schemes which are already in progress concentrate on those who leave school at 16 but the Secretaries of State wish also to explore the use of records of achievement for older school leavers, including cases where there is a break at 16 with provision made in sixth form colleges: there is also a good case for including pupils leaving tertiary colleges. To confine the target group to those expected to leave school with few if any examination certificates, or to leave at the earliest possible opportunity, would make records of achievement less attractive to the recipients and to prospective users. In any case, achievements which are not measured by examinations are important for all pupils. The Secretaries of State believe that records of achievement should be available to pupils with special educational needs (whether in special or ordinary schools) although special schools providing for those with severe or multiple handicaps will probably need to be given some discretion to dispense with the record.

Content

11. Records of achievement should comprise:

(1) information which throws light on personal achievements and characteristics;

(2) any graded results in public examinations; and/or

(3) other evidence of academic attainment.

A document incorporating these components could be laid out in a variety of ways. For example it may or may not prove desirable to keep examination results and performance in other tests of attainment in separate compartments (bearing in mind, for instance, that examination results may be known only after the pupil has left school); or to compile and record separately evidence of academic ability in addition to examination results for those expected to obtain good grades at 16+ and 18+ or for those pursuing pre-vocational qualifications at 17+. The form of assessment and certification for the new CPVE is intended to be more informative about a candidate's attributes and strengths than a collection of grades in single subject examinations and information collected for this purpose may not need to be further elaborated for the purpose of components (2) and (3) of the record of achievement. The two operations will need to be co-ordinated and each is likely to influence the design of the other.

Personal Achievements

12. There is comparatively little practical experience of compiling this component of a record of achievement and it will doubtless undergo progressive refinement and modification in the course of the pilot stage. The Secretaries of State believe that the following principles should apply:

(i) It is essential to provide information which throws light on such qualities as enthusiasm, persistence, willingness to accept responsibility and the ability to participate constructively in a group activity. But the record is likely to carry more weight if it concentrates on concrete examples of what the pupil has achieved or experienced. There are strong arguments in favour of designing records in such a way that personal qualities and skills are mainly inferred from accounts of actual achievements in activities in which the pupil has participated – or from the absence of such information.

(ii) The description should give a fair and reasonable picture of a pupil's personal achievements over a period of time at school, but should not attempt to give an all-embracing picture of the pupil as a human being. Most teachers would properly wish to describe only how a pupil has responded to what the school offers and so confine the description to matters of which they have direct knowledge and evidence.

(iii) There is a strong case for giving pupils an opportunity to include in the record their own account of experience and achievements outside school, provided that the record clearly identifies the source of this evidence. There may also be scope for pupil and teacher to collaborate in the preparation of some parts of the record: for example in what is said about the pupil's participation in activities such as the school play or in school clubs and societies.

(iv) One feature of some existing schemes which the Secretaries of State would not wish to see imitated is the practice of grading personal qualities in the form of ticks or letters whose significance is not clear, however conscientious the attempt to define the grade descriptions. Such gradings contain unsupported and often negative judgements and are open to misinterpretation. In their recent survey, HMI report critically on certain schemes of assessment which resulted in a fixed percentage of the group being awarded the lowest grade for attainment, irrespective of whether or not the group spanned the full range of ability. Such a method is plainly even less suitable for a description of personal qualities.

(v) It seems important to maintain a distinction between effort and attainment so that pupils gain credit for hard work, regardless of their ability; and effort should not go unremarked even if it does not always prove possible to provide the evidence that it has led to attainment.

Examination Results

13. This part of the document would record positive achievements in any public examination. It might usefully refer the user to any explanatory material which is available: eg the grade descriptions in the national criteria which are being developed for examinations at 16+. Many school leavers seek their first job (and will wish to use their record of achievement) before the end of their final year at school. Appropriate mechanisms will need to be developed for retrieving the record in order to add examination results when these are available.

Other Evidence of Educational Attainment

14. For those who leave school without having entered for public examinations, or who fail to obtain graded results, the description of personal achievement should, where possible, be underpinned by other evidence of educational attainment. The objective of the Secretaries of State is to find means of systematically assessing and recording the progress of such pupils in certain subjects and the acquisition of the key skills of literacy and numeracy. They would like eventually to see included in the record of every pupil some evidence of attainment in mathematics, English, and science, and, in the record of most pupils, some evidence of attainment in a foreign language. In Wales consideration will need to be given to the best way of recording the progress of those who have studied Welsh as a first or second language. The realisation of these objectives will prove to be a very substantial task and will be affected by the availability of resources. The Secretaries of State do not at this stage envisage including evidence of attainment in other subjects as an essential part of the record for all pupils.

15. There is growing interest in the use of graded tests to present pupils – especially those in non-examination groups – with a sequence of learning objectives through which they may progress at their own speed. Graded examinations in music are the most familiar example. The only other graded tests in substantial use in schools are those for foreign languages.* A number of LEAs, examination boards and institutions are engaged in the investigation and development of tests in other subjects, in some cases on a pilot basis as an element in a record of achievement. It remains to be seen whether graded tests can become instruments for improving teaching and learning and assessment to the extent of some of the hopes which have been expressed.

16. Some key subjects are likely to lend themselves to this form of assessment more readily than others. In mathematics, for example, there is a good prospect of making useful progress with graded tests based on the educational objectives recommended in the Cockcroft

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*See: "A Survey of the Use of Graded Tests of Defined Objectives and their effect on the Teaching and Learning of Modern Languages in the County of Oxfordshire": a Report by HM Inspectors. DES 1983. See also Schools Council Examinations Bulletin 41: "Review of Graded Tests".

Report: work to this end has been commissioned by the Department of Education and Science and other work is being undertaken elsewhere on the initiative of LEAs, examination boards and teacher training institutions.

17. The case may be different in English. Pupils learning their own language do not progress through a sequence of language objectives but constantly expand and adapt familiar components of the skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading. There are in existence no graded tests in English which match up to educational need and there must be doubt about the feasibility of developing such tests. Other approaches to recording and assessing individual progress in this subject will therefore need to be investigated. The Secretaries of State intend shortly to publish for discussion a statement about the objectives of English teaching in primary and secondary schools. A list of objectives which commands general support might enable teachers to appraise their pupils' progress in different modes of language, using course work rather than timed examinations as their source of evidence, on a basis which users of the record could accept as reliable.

18. The work on national criteria for 16+ examinations in French and in science subjects, the work of the APU, and the recent consultative documents on science and modern languages provide pointers to what it may be reasonable to expect of lower attaining pupils in these subjects and how best to assess their progress for the purpose of a record of achievement. But much more work needs to be done before it is clear how attainment in modern languages and science can best be assessed for those without an examination certificate in these subjects.

19. An important issue requiring further investigation is the nature of arrangements for moderating a school's internal assessment of attainment in mathematics, English, science and foreign languages, especially where this will not take the form of generally agreed graded tests.

Compilation

20. The Secretaries of State envisage that schools should start to compile information and evidence for records of achievement from the beginning of the secondary phase (age 11/12) whether this begins in secondary or middle schools. The dossier should begin with an entry summarising achievements by the end of the primary phase. The first 3 aims outlined in paragraph 5 above call for a systematic recording of progress and attainment until the pupil leaves school. These arrangements will need to include provision for transmitting the record from one school to another, both in LEAs where the pattern of secondary education involves breaks between institutions (eg at 13/14 or at 16+) and for pupils moving from one part of the country to another. For the purpose of the fourth aim outlined in paragraph 5, the record would not need to include much of the material from the earlier years, and it would need to be borne in mind that, once issued, the record will gradually become less relevant and valuable to the pupil. Early entries in the dossier would no doubt be discarded or modified over time.

Authorship

21. The Secretaries of State believe that the school, and not the pupil, should bear the main responsibility for ensuring that a record of achievement is completed. Unless the description of their pupils' responses to what the school offers comes from the teachers, the document is unlikely to gain sufficient credibility to serve all the aims outlined in paragraph 3, above. It is important that several teachers should contribute to the record so as to provide different perspectives on the achievements of each pupil, but the Secretaries of State see advantages in an arrangement whereby a single teacher takes charge of co-ordinating the various entries. There should, however, be opportunities for pupils, with or without adult assistance, to contribute to the personal element of the record; and it would seem useful to give parents an opportunity for comment or additional observation, for example on any achievements outside the school which pupils are given the primary responsibility to record.

Ownership

22. The record should become the property of the pupil who would be free to decide whether or not to show it to prospective employers and others. It would be for the pupil to decide whether to run the risk that refusal to produce a record might reflect adversely on him or her.

Action

23. The Secretaries of State intend that this statement of policy and principles will be adopted as a frame of

reference for local education authorities and others engaged locally in the development of records of achievement.

Pilot Schemes

24. In order to provide a focus for local initiatives and the foundation for introducing records of achievement on a national basis, the Secretaries of State believe that it would also be valuable if a few pilot schemes were established in partnership with local education authorities and others. The purpose of these schemes would be, first, to enlarge the number of individuals at every level with direct practical experience of records of achievement and, secondly, to provide the evidence for comparing and evaluating different approaches and for estimating the extra costs arising, in particular, from the necessary in-service education and training of teachers and from the additional demands on their time and on the time of employers and other users.

25. The Education (Grants) Bill 1983 now being considered by Parliament would enable the Secretaries of State to pay education support grant to LEAs in support of a limited amount of expenditure on activities to be defined in Regulations. On the assumption that this Bill is enacted, the Secretaries of State are likely to propose to the local authority associations that a limited number of pilot schemes of records of achievement should be assisted by education support grants. The total amount of expenditure supported might be of the order of £1-2 millions a year for 5 years.

26. Local education authorities would also be consulted about detailed arrangements for managing and evaluating such a programme. These are likely to include the appointment of a single steering committee at national level. It would be open to all LEAs to submit bids for development projects in schools and to seek support for the extension or improvement of existing projects as well as to propose new schemes. There are strong arguments that preference ought to be given to schemes based on groups of LEAs or involving co-operation between LEAs and examination boards. All schemes should involve close co-operation between the LEA(s) and local employers. It is envisaged that the schemes should be broadly consistent with the guiding principles set out in this statement, which are sufficiently broad to permit a variety of different approaches to important issues.

27. In order to learn early lessons from existing pilot schemes of records of achievement the Secretaries of State have asked the Secondary Examinations Council to assist in monitoring and evaluating work already in progress in different parts of the country. It is well-placed to evaluate the graded tests and other new forms of assessment which are being developed by some of the GCE and CSE boards and the relationship of these tests with syllabuses and grade descriptions for examinations at 16+. The evaluation of the national programme of pilot schemes will be financed from the research budget of the Department of Education and Science. The DES development projects for lower attaining pupils involve work relevant to records of achievement, as does the TVEI. This aspect will be included in the published evaluation of both programmes.

NOTE
In July 1984 the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales issued *Records of achievement: a statement of policy*. The document sets out the Government's thinking, in the light of the almost unanimously favourable responses to the earlier draft statement, and details the proposed next steps. It is the Government's wish that, by the end of the decade, all young people will have records of achievement, relating to all aspects of their development, compiled in the course of regular dialogues with teachers throughout their time in secondary school. On leaving school pupils will receive a summary record 'prepared within a framework of national policy which leaves scope for local variations'. In order to facilitate employer recognition of summary records it is suggested that the arrangements by which schools compile and check the record should be accredited by an appropriate outside organisation. Pilot schemes, suggested in the draft statement, will be funded by the DES with a view to gaining more experience of records of achievement.

APPENDIX B

FEU Comments on records of achievement for school leavers: a draft policy statement

1. The FEU Board of Management generally welcomes the draft policy statement on Records of Achievement for School Leavers. The FEU has, since the publication in 1979 of *A basis for choice* promoted the concept, sponsored field work, published guidance and, more recently, has investigated the use of computers in the area of student profiles.

2. The FEU would therefore welcome a policy statement promoting a move towards profiles in the schools sector. Indeed, with the growing co-operation between schools and the further education sector on curricular developments such as TVEI and CPVE, the Board regrets that the policy statement intends to stop short of further education. The problems are similar in both sectors and we are aware that FEU publications on this topic are taken note of in many schools. We note also, that one of the aims to be satisfied by records of achievement is related to their use by further education as a 'consumer', and the inclusion of FE in the piloting could well pay dividends in this respect.

3. We strongly support paragraph 10 and the application of such records to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. We are also pleased to see that there is the possibility of using them for older school leavers.

4. We welcome the intended increase in the pace and scale of experimental activity, as suggested in paragraph 8 of the draft. The FEU agrees that the time which teachers may need to devote to such records, is correctly identified as an issue in the document. As described above, we already have in hand, work on computer assisted profiling and we would be pleased to extend this experience into schools-based pilots as we believe that this may well be a method of reducing the time necessary for teachers to spend on recording achievement. More generally, we would hope that the experiments would be seen as an opportunity for staff training and development in this area of assessment.

5. We have some reservations with respect to the suggestion in paragraph 6 of the document that such records 'would not refer to failure or defects'. We recognise that any record of achievement should be as positive and supportive as possible, and indeed this is one of the main reasons why the FEU has promoted profiles. The deliberate exclusion of non-positive characteristics however, could undermine the validity of the record, no one is perfect and the total absence of negative comment could reduce the value of the record, to the pupil as well as to others. We appreciate the sensitivity of the issue and we would not wish to see eroded the spirit of a supportive document. It does however seem worthwhile to include the issue of negative comments in the piloting experiments.

6. Similarly, we would consider, with reference to paragraphs 4 and 9, that the relationship between national co-ordination and locally devised profiles would be well worth including in some of the pilot studies. This in part is related to the existence or otherwise of core curricular components. Indeed with respect to paragraph 12, there is some doubt as to the extent to which such records are to relate to the curriculum. The statements in 12i and 12iii indicate that the records may well be concerned with out of school activities. The extent to which this is possible and desirable should be explored in the pilots. Generally the FEU wishes to support the recording of personal characteristics on two conditions, namely that it is related to the curriculum and that the pupil or student somehow participates in the assessment. To include personal characteristics raises the question of how far the pupil or student can be made aware of all the objectives and the processes of the curriculum. Effort should be made to ensure as full an awareness as possible and to avoid that which is covert. The quality of a profile or record of achievement is inevitably related to the quality of the whole curriculum which is served. An ambiguous relationship between the curriculum and its record of achievement is not likely to well serve the pupil.

7. It follows from the above that the development of records of achievement cannot be isolated from curriculum development, and the inter-relationship between the two should be stressed in any final policy statement. We note with satisfaction in paragraph 17 of the draft the use of objectives which commend general support. This principle has applied to several governmental and non-governmental statements about the curriculum of schools in recent years. It is an approach to curriculum design which FEU uses but which does not yet have major backing in statements directed at, for instance, local authorities and colleges in the FE sector. A clear definition of the relationship between curriculum and

assessment in all parts of the public education service would do a great deal to underpin the development and trial-testing of records of achievement.

8. To summarise:

(i) The FEU welcomes the Department's initiative in supporting the principle of profiling in schools across the entire ability range and including older school pupils;

(ii) We would prefer to see some involvement of the FE sector, especially in those curricular areas common to schools and colleges;

(iii) In suppporting the need for more experimental activity, the FEU would suggest the inclusion of the following characteristics:
  (a) the application of microcomputers as an aid;
  (b) the opportunity to create staff training and development activities;
  (c) the worthwhileness of including negative comments;
  (d) the extent of the compatibility possible between national and local design;
  (e) the participation of pupils in assessments of personal qualities.

(iv) We believe that it will be important to clarify in any final statement that records of achievement must be related to the curriculum on offer; and recognition that in some cases this may require a sharper definition of curricular aims and objectives.

(FEU/January 1984)

FEU Publications

Profiles in action is one of a number of FEU publications intended to inform teachers and others and to stimulate professional discussion about matters of concern to the FE Service. Other FEU documents dealing with profiling include:

Profiles: a review of issues and practice in the use and development of student profiles. September 1982

This document is a collection of papers which examines the issues and reviews some of the current practice in the developing field of profile recording of young peoples attainments. Examples of completed profile reports from various organisations and FE colleges are included in the appendices.. Throughout the document student profiles are seen as both an opportunity and a challenge. An opportunity to emphasise success, to record experience, to create criteria and to enrich the learning process; a challenge to existing modes of teaching/ examining and, above all, to the way we grade and classify young people.

Computer aided profiling: a case study of the North Warwickshire College of Technology and Art. September 1983

A description of how North Warwickshire College approached the computerisation of student profiles for a full-time vocational preparation course. The report outlines the background against which the computerisation idea evolved, the design of the profile, its computerisation, the means by which the idea has begun to be further disseminated throughout the college, the implementation of the profile on one course and the lessons which have been learned as a result. Appendix 1 of the document presents the computer specification.

Vocational preparation January 1981

Working from the premise that the process of vocational preparation should be available to all young people, the document urges that priority should at least be given to those young people who are not already preparing for higher education nor are engaged in well established programmes of vocational education and training. In designing courses for such young people the document identifies four key curriculum themes: Negotiation; Counselling; Guidance and Assessment (via a student profile); Basic Skills; and Relevance of Experience.

FEU comments on 'Records of achievement for school leavers'. (DES/Welsh Office draft policy statement). January 1984

Copies of these documents (which are free of charge) are obtainable, while stocks last, from the Publications Despatch Centre, DES, Honeypot Lane, Canons Park, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1AZ.

A complete list of FEU publications is also available from the above address.

The FEU has a number of Research Projects (RP's) ongoing in the profiling field:

RP80	Computer Assisted Profiling
RP86	A Computerised Profiling Scheme for Numeracy, Communications and Media Studies
RP170	Computer Assisted Profiling for Basic Skills in a Penal Establishment
RP196	Computer Assisted Profiling: a Generic Microcomputer Based Package

Details of these Research Projects can be obtained from the FEU Information Centre, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH.